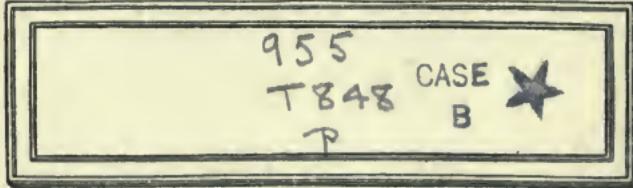
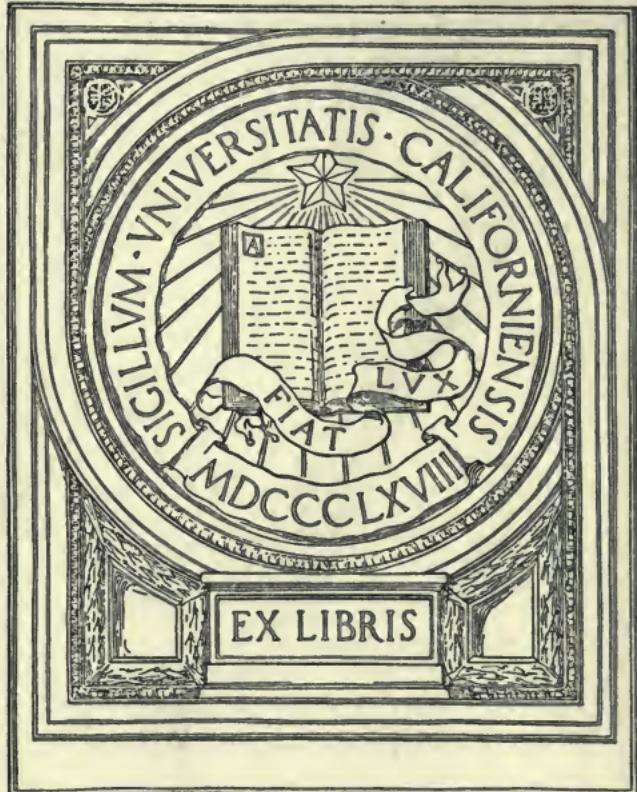
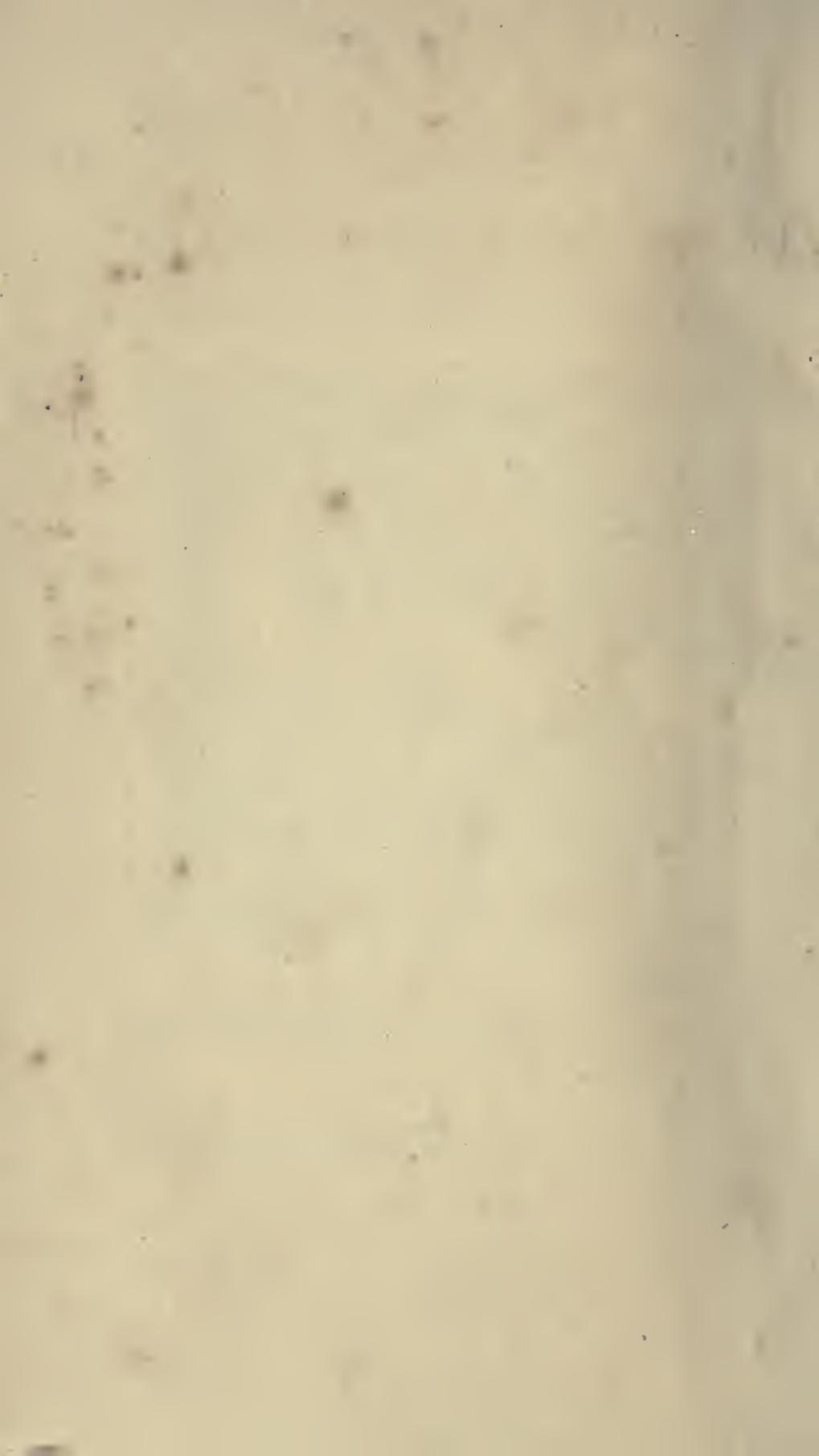


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PETTICOAT GOVERNMENT.

A NOVEL.

BY

MRS. TROLLOPE,

AUTHOR OF "THE LOTTERY OF MARRIAGE," "FATHER EUSTACE," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,

GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1850.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SON,
ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

PETTICOAT GOVERNMENT.

CHAPTER I.

THE season was now arrived for the display of contemporary talent in the annual exhibition of the Royal Academy. Judith had been taken in proper style by Mrs. Dorking to the private view, but as Frederic was by her side and more than usually agreeable, and as her attention was, to say the least, pretty constantly divided on that occasion between the celebrities who walked the floor and those who were suspended on the walls, she took an early opportunity after the departure of Mrs. Chilbert to visit this splendid display of na-

tional talent, national industry, and national wealth, with the faithful friend who was only too happy to follow her wherever she liked to go, who was ready to pause where she paused, and to move on when she moved on.

Young as Judith was, and ignorant as till very lately she had been of every thing deserving the name of art, she was not now such an ignorant novice as not to feel the heavy change produced upon her feelings by going from one side of the Trafalgar Square Gallery to the other. For some time she experienced so great a sensation of displeasure from the exchange, that she felt strongly inclined to protest that she would never look at any newly painted canvass again, for that there was something in the glare and dazzling freshness that made her head ache, and caused her altogether to feel ill and uncomfortable.

“ After my constant visits to the dear old gallery, it seems like the greediness of a child, who throws aside a delicate nectarine for the sake of munching a huge apple, to come here,” said she to Miss Tollbridge, the first time they entered the Royal Academy together, which was at that well chosen early hour which

those faithful allies always selected for seeing pictures.

“Certainly, my dear, the two galleries will not bear a comparison,” replied Miss Tollbridge; but I don’t think it is quite fair to make one.”

“Oh! how true that is!” cried the reasonable Judith, instantly feeling that the apple might be a precious thing as well as the nectarine, and that nothing but the simplicity of folly, or the sophistication of affectation, could so place them in *juxta-position*, as to make one lessen the value of the other.

“My dear Miss Tollbridge! that little word of yours has given me an invaluable lesson,” continued Judith, passing her arm under that of her companion, and preparing herself for what she had never attempted before; namely, a deliberate examination of the pictures.

“In the first place, you know that we have here the miscellaneous labours of a most miscellaneous set. Many of them perhaps early attempts, and many more produced, not by the bright and almost god-like inspirations of genius, but by the necessity of imitating a homely set of features, male or female, young

or old, in order that the artist may live ! I wish," she resumed, after shutting her eyes for a moment, "I wish they were not so very bright ! But I dare say they will become less painful to the eyes when the tints are mellowed a little by time, and when there are not so many of them to be seen together."

"Yes, I dare say it would be so," replied Miss Tollbridge. "And besides, if we knew all the people," she added, "it would be a great deal more interesting."

"Do you think it would ?" returned Judith, rather doubtfully. "But let us sit down here for a moment," said she, drawing her companion towards a convenient bench, "for I feel rather giddy. The whole effect is perfectly dazzling."

They sat down, and occupied themselves silently for several minutes in looking at what was within their reach, Miss Tollbridge consulting her catalogue the whole time with unwearyed industry, while Judith was indulging in meditation. "I wish," said the latter, at length, "I wish Miss Tollbridge that I could persuade myself that all the weary hours that

have been bestowed on this world of canvass had been paid for, liberally paid for! If I were sure of this, the looking at them would be much less painful."

"Painful? my dear child! Do not stay a moment longer if you find it painful," cried Miss Tollbridge, eagerly.

"Oh! yes; I must stay, for I want to look at a great many of them. I did not exactly mean bodily pain," said Judith, "but I cannot help thinking how dreadful it must be to labour so for an uncertainty! And even then, suppose the work was ordered, a portrait, for instance, like that fat gentleman before us, in his fine satin waistcoat, how do we know but that the poor artist may be conscious of really possessing some talent? Perhaps he may feel that he could paint a group of naked children at play, that might look like so many living creatures suddenly suspended in their movements and thrown upon the canvass as it were by magic; Rubens does that, you know, continually. But only fancy the misery of an artist who *could* do something a little like it, fancy his misery at being obliged to do such a thing as *that*, in order to avoid starvation!"

There is pain in that idea, is there not Miss Tollbridge?"

"Indeed there is!" replied her companion, very dolorously.

Judith sat on for some minutes in perfect silence, meditating sadly enough upon her uncle Worthington, and her aunt Worthington, and her cousin Charles Worthington, and upon the cruel ill-luck which prevented a meeting between them, which would be likely to give so much pleasure to them all; for at that moment her two maiden aunts, her intended mother-in-law, and even her intended husband were quite forgotten.

"We must not go till we have had a look at Mr. Landseer's pictures," said Miss Tollbridge, interrupting her reverie. And they rose, and moved on.

"These dogs," said Judith, as she stood before a great picture of the great artist; "these dogs, Miss Tollbridge, overthrow all my amiable theories about old pictures, and new pictures, and the mellowing effects of time, and the inspiring result of patronage, when warmed by royal companionship and noble friendships,—not to mention a multitude of

other fanciful ‘*may be’s*,’ by which, for this hour past I have been endeavouring to account for the difference between what has been, and what is. But, notwithstanding all my deep consciousness of my own ignorance, nothing will persuade me that dogs were ever before pourtrayed with such exquisite skill as those before us. The shepherd, great as it is, may have had an equal in the good old days that are gone, but the dogs never.”

“They are very good dogs indeed!” replied Miss Tollbridge, in an accent so utterly unsympathetic, that poor Judith felt positively ashamed of herself, and blushed the genuine blush of sixteen and a half, at having been guilty of enthusiasm.

Had she followed her first impulse, she would have gone in search of the servant and the carriage directly; but she was too good-natured to do this, for she had established it as a rule, whenever they made one of their morning visits to Trafalgar Square, that the adventure should conclude with a visit to Farrance, the pastry-cook; Judith having discovered, beyond the possibility of doubt, that ices and buns formed a luncheon parti-

cularly agreeable to Miss Tollbridge. But it was still too early for this, and therefore, after leaving the great rooms, they strolled into one of the smaller ones, in which were exhibited flower-pieces, plans of porticoes and palaces, and drawings of various descriptions.

As there was still a good half-hour to be worn away before there was any chance of their finding ice ready, Judith sat herself to examine the walls systematically, and while thus engaged she came upon a small drawing, neatly mounted, which looked more fitted for the pages of a lady's album than for the walls of the Royal Academy, but which, nevertheless, struck her as being singularly graceful and picturesque.

Had Judith ever been at Rome, she would have instantly recognised in this little coloured sketch the well known steps of the Piazza di Spagna, with its usual groups of black-eyed children, about equally remarkable for dirt and picturesque costume, and all holding themselves ready to obey the beckon of the first artist who might chance to want them in his studio.

The drawing was slight, but brilliant, and

very graceful, both in composition and execution.

She looked at it long, and then passed on ; but nothing else detained her attention much, and again she returned to it. On this second examination, it appeared to her still more interesting, and more effective in its masterly but slight finishing than at first ; and having given up her catalogue to Miss Tollbridge, she asked her to turn to No. 1695, and tell her what she found there.

Miss Tollbridge obeyed her instantly, and read very distinctly these words :—“ Sketch of well-known models, from the steps in the Piazza di Spagna, at Rome. Charles Worthington, No. * * Newman Street, Oxford Street.”

Judith uttered a cry that drew upon her all the eyes in the room. Fortunately, they were not many ; and as she had sufficient presence of mind to seat herself immediately, and to hide her agitated features amidst the draperies of her friend, who immediately drew near her, she escaped any very obvious attention.

But the moment was, indeed, one that might

well overthrow her fortitude. The search after her aunt, hitherto so vain, yet ever held by her as so sacred an enterprise from having been enjoined by the last words of her mother, was at last successful, and that at a time when she had almost begun to think it hopeless.

The first faint weakness of a too sudden emotion being passed, her feelings were all made up of joy and thankfulness, and she could with difficulty restrain herself from giving such outward demonstrations of this joy, as might have made both it and herself more conspicuous than would have been desirable.

But what was she to do ? What was she to do first ?

Fly to them without a moment's delay, was the answer that her heart gave to this question. But she did not want to have Miss Tollbridge,—she did not want to have anybody present at her first interview with her aunt.

That good, kind friend stood looking at her with such an expression of mixed astonishment and anxiety on her features, as made it absolutely necessary that she should, in some way, explain to her what was passing in her

mind. But the thing was by no means easy, for not only had she to get rid of Miss Tollbridge, but she felt that, under all ordinary circumstances, her next step ought to be to inform her aunt Elfreda of the discovery she had made, and invite her to take Miss Tollbridge's place, and accompany her instantly to Newman Street.

But the thought of doing this fell upon her heart like ice. All the cold, harsh anger, the cruel indifference, with which every mention, every allusion, to her aunt Penelope had been always met by her maiden sisters, recurred to her so strongly, that she felt she should be doing Mrs. Worthington an injury rather than a kindness, if she forced upon her the visit of Miss Elfreda at the same time as her own. It is wonderful to see with what rapidity circumstances will assist in developing character, at the age when childhood is giving place to adolescence.

A few moments sufficed to awaken in the heart and head of Judith a multitude of faculties which had never been in action there before ; and the result was, that she turned to her uneasy-looking friend with a kind smile,

and said, "I am afraid I have frightened you, my dear Miss Tollbridge, because I have been startled myself. I have found in the catalogue of artists' names one that interests me greatly, because it is one that would have interested my mother. But if it prove to be the person I hope it is, the discovery will be a very pleasant one, and therefore it is only joy that has overpowered me. I will take you home now, if you will let me; and then I will set myself soberly to think of what steps it will be best to take, in order to ascertain whether I am right or wrong in my conjecture."

Miss Tollbridge immediately prepared to accompany her down stairs, but she looked into her face inquiringly; and as Judith said no more, she ventured to observe, as the carriage door closed upon them, that, of course, Judith would want to go home directly, in order to consult her aunt Elfreda.

"I will tell you what must be done before anybody is consulted," replied Judith, with such gay indifference of tone, as greatly to tranquillize the spirits of her companion; "we must drive to Farrance's, Miss Tollbridge," and she gave the necessary order to the servant.

"You must not be cheated out of your luncheon, because I have seen in the catalogue a name with which my mother was acquainted."

But when the carriage stopped, poor Judith felt that she had no power to wait for the deliberate disappearance of a mountain of ice under the cautious teaspoon of Miss Tollbridge ; and, therefore, with a considerable tincture of her new-born decision of character, she checked the footman when he was about to open the door, saying, "No, Thomas, no ; we shall not get out to-day. Tell them to put up half-a-dozen Bath buns, and we will take them in the carriage." Had Judith been tempted by any circumstance to make such an alteration in her usual arrangements a few hours before, it might have been done, perhaps, but it would have been done differently ; and trifling as the occurrence was, Miss Tollbridge felt this difference to a degree that would have greatly astonished Judith had she been aware of it, for she was perfectly unconscious of any such change herself. But had she pressed her own hand upon her own bosom at that moment, she would have become conscious, at least, that

she was not likely to do or say any thing in an ordinary way.

"Store Street," said Judith, as she received the packet of buns. And to Store Street, where the lodgings of Miss Tollbridge were situated, the carriage drove, and reached it almost without the two ladies having exchanged a word.

Miss Tollbridge could not imagine why Judith was so silent, but Judith was not in the least degree aware either of her own silence or that of her companion.

At length Miss Tollbridge and the buns being safely deposited in Store Street, and the door of the house closed upon them, Judith distinctly pronounced the words "No. — Newman Street," and the carriage was again in motion.

It would be no easy task to describe the condition of the young girl during the short interval that now elapsed before the carriage again stopped. It was not without a very considerable effort that she was able to pronounce intelligibly, "Inquire if Mrs. Worthington is at home."

CHAPTER II.

THE answer to this interrogatory, given by an exceedingly dirty girl who opened the door, was "Yes, sir," while something, almost amounting to terror, seemed to seize upon her as she gazed on the unwonted spectacle of a smart carriage and footman. "Open the door!" cried Judith, with an impatient movement of her hand.

Thomas obeyed; the carriage door was opened, the steps let down, and in the next instant Judith was in the passage.

"Where is Mrs. Worthington?" said she; for the girl, instead of preceding, suffered her to pass, and then stood staring at her.

"Two pair, front, my lady," was the reply. Judith darted forward towards the narrow stairs.

"Hadn't I better go up first, Miss?" said Thomas, following her. "It seems a queer place, like, for you to go up alone, Miss."

But Judith declined his services, saying that she knew very well where she was going.

And then with a beating heart and faltering step she pursued her way, determining to be very self-possessed, and not to make any blunder.

Nor did she; for she passed on from the first floor to the second, and having reached this, she knocked timidly enough at what she knew was the two-pair front door.

A somewhat loud and manly voice replied by the words "Come in."

And then Judith began to wish that Thomas was behind her, for the landing-place was very narrow and very dark, and if it should prove that she had made a mistake, her situation might be very embarrassing. Fortunately, however, she recollects that she had asked for *Mrs. Worthington*, and that the answer had clearly indicated that some *Mrs. Worth-*

ington was there ; so she took a long breath and all the courage she could find at the same time, and grasping the handle of the door, she turned it resolutely and entered the room.

It would be irrelevant at this moment to relate what she found there, though there might have been much which, under other circumstances, would have seized strongly enough upon her attention ; but now there was but one object which could correctly be said to be visible to her, inasmuch as the one only thing she saw was a tall, thin, pale woman in black, who had more of sorrow and of sickness upon her beautiful features than Judith had ever seen before, even at the death-bed of her mother.

And why was it that she so instantly felt persuaded that this pale woman was her aunt ? There was not in this case the remotest trace of family resemblance between her and either of her sisters, for she alone was dark-eyed and dark-browed, and, till prematurely silvered, had possessed a profusion of coal-black hair, of which a Spanish lady might have been proud.

And yet Judith hesitated not for a single

instant. It seemed as if her heart rather than her eyes acknowledged the relationship, for after giving one glance round the room, rather as if to see if any person or thing could tell her she was mistaken than to seek for confirmation of her hopes, she bounded forward towards the startled stranger.

But that one rapid glance had shown her much. The aspect of the room was cold and comfortless, and ill-furnished to a degree that plainly announced poverty in its tenants. And this it was which caused the first embrace that Judith ever bestowed on the beloved, the dearly beloved, sister of her mother to be given on her knees.

“Oh! my aunt Penelope!” cried the poor girl, unconsciously expressing in her attitude, her look, her tone, a whole volume of eloquent grief at finding her as she had found her. And there she stopped, and sobbing, almost convulsively, laid her head upon Mrs. Worthington’s lap, and covered her hands with kisses.

Why Judith so instantly felt certain that she was in the presence of her aunt, it is not very easy to tell; but there is no difficulty in

explaining why Mrs. Worthington knew that it was the daughter of her darling sister Judith who kneeled before her, for never, perhaps, did a child more accurately picture a parent than Judith did her mother.

But the emotion was too powerful, too sudden for nerves so shaken and a spirit so broken as those of the poor artist's widow, to endure safely. For one short moment she retained her consciousness, and bending over the kneeling girl, pressed her pale lips upon her forehead ; but the next, she did not bend, but fell, and Judith would scarcely have found sufficient strength to sustain her, had not a pair of arms more powerful than her own suddenly came to her assistance.

Between the two she was gently raised and laid upon the miserable-looking sofa, and then the ordinary remedies of friction and cold water speedily restored her to her senses.

But she still looked deadly pale, and Judith was still much alarmed.

“It is passed !” said the young man who stood beside her tenderly holding one hand of the invalid between both his own. “My mother is not very strong, but this faintness

has passed away so quickly, that she will be quite herself again in a moment."

Judith, who till now had stood gazing fixedly on the pale features of her aunt, now raised her eyes to the person who addressed her. This was a tall and, as far as she was able to judge under his very uncouth costume, an extremely handsome young man. But Judith certainly looked at him with rather more surprise than admiration. Had she been familiar with the studios of the continent, or even of England, she would not have been so greatly puzzled to understand why he was dressed so queerly.

To her eyes the effect of his brown-holland blouse was exactly that of a waggoner's smock frock, nor could the quantity of dark curls that protruded themselves from beneath the flat cloth cap he wore, redeem him from the imputation of being altogether the very strangest looking person she had ever seen.

There was, however, something in the little caressing ways with which he was taking care of his mother that softened her heart a little, and there was less of quizzing than of kindness in the way in which she said, upon their eyes

meeting as they both at the same moment looked up from the face of the invalid towards each other, "And you, then, I suppose, are my cousin Charles?"

This was said with a smile, and was answered in the same manner. "I should think it very likely," said the young man, "if I could persuade myself to believe it possible that a poor artist could be the cousin of so very elegant a young lady."

Judith was, in truth, dressed with very peculiar elegance, a peculiarity, by the way, which she really would never have either sought for or achieved had she been left to herself; but elegance of all sorts, and especially in dress, was the *forte* of Mrs. Dorking. Within a very few hours of her first introduction to her daughter elect, she had gently given her to understand what were the most essential points upon which the fabric of their future family harmony and everlasting affection was to rest. Among these, elegance of toilet of the first class was without scruple brought forward as, perhaps, the most vitally important of all.

Had Frederic Dorking said as much to her,

their engagement would have been of very short duration, for Judith, young as she was, was quite conscious that she deserved a better fate than to be made a puppet to hang draperies on.

But she acquitted him most completely of all share in the matter, and only loved him the better for his compliant deference to the whims and wishes of a mother, whose intellect and character she felt he must have despised, had her influence been of a less sacred character.

For herself, she at once determined that neither her present nor future happiness should be put in peril by her disobedience on such a point as this; and in discussing the subject with Mrs. Chilbert, she had fully agreed with her in thinking that as dear, excellent Frederic was so very obedient a son, it was a great blessing that his mother seemed inclined to use her authority chiefly on points too essentially frivolous to have any serious effect on their domestic happiness.

In a word, then, the fact is, that Judith was very elegantly attired ; and as her appearance, both as to form and feature, was as remarkable

for refinement as for beauty, it was natural enough that the discerning eye of the young artist perceived something in her general appearance with which, as he said, he scarcely felt himself privileged to claim kindred.

And Judith at that moment felt it too, but it was only in such a sort as to make her from her very heart detest the trappings with which they must think she had decorated herself, in order to inspire them with admiration at her greatness.

She blushed to the very deepest tint that the delicate tincture of her complexion would permit as this idea occurred to her, and said, with the look and manner of a person deeply wounded by an offensive observation, "I do beg of you, cousin Charles, not to form your own judgment of me, or lead my dear, dear aunt to form hers, upon the style of my ridiculous dress. It is not of my own choosing. If it had been," she added, relaxing from her look of indignation into a smile, "if it had been, I might have proved to you, perhaps at the very first glance, that I am not so foreign to your kindred as you may fancy. My appearance, in that case, might have had as little of the

milliner in it, as that of your own dear mother, my precious aunt Penelope!"

And Judith, as she spoke, once more sank on her knees beside her still recumbent aunt, and once more covered her pale hands with kisses.

The young man turned away his head, but not long enough to conceal the fact, that this unexpected tenderness on the part of this fine cousin towards his mother had brought tears into his eyes.

As to the sorrow-worn Mrs. Worthington, she was completely overcome by it, and sobbed almost convulsively as she returned the caresses of her kneeling niece.

"She cannot stand it! Upon my soul, she cannot!" cried poor Charles, looking greatly terrified. "You know not how ill she has been—how dreadfully she has suffered—and how utterly reduced she is in strength!"

Judith indeed began to fear that by indulging her own feelings she was too greatly exciting those of her so lately found and so dearly valued aunt, and suddenly rising, she cast a penitent glance at Charles, and said, "Indeed, indeed, cousin Charles, you must forgive me!"

If you knew all I have suffered during the terrible months that I have been vainly seeking her, you would not wonder at my losing all command of myself now."

"Have you been seeking her?" cried Charles joyously. "Hear that, mamma!" (the pretty Italian puerility must be pardoned, because it had become habitual to him). "Hear that, mamma! and don't let me see you die for joy, after watching you for so long living in sorrow."

"Have you, indeed, been seeking for me, my sweet girl? My own Judith's Judith, and her own living image! Have you, indeed, been seeking for me?"

"Have I?" cried Judith eagerly. "I have sought you till the not finding you has almost broken my heart. At this very moment, a first attempt is being made at Rome to trace you either there, or to follow you, whithersoever you went, when you left it."

"And your failure, my dear child, is but too intelligible. The last letter that I wrote to your dear mother announced to her our intention of leaving Rome, but it was written before we had at all decided upon the place in which we should fix ourselves. In the first instance

we went to Paris, and should probably have remained there, I believe, had not Charles taken it into his head that it was too cold for me in the winter, because it is so difficult to get fuel—at least without very ruinous expense, and I therefore yielded the point, and came to England. But, to say the truth, dearest Judith, my native land is no fitting home for me, or for my dear boy either."

"Oh, do not say that, aunt Worthington!" cried Judith, "because it is my home now, and my home must be your home."

Mrs. Worthington looked at her earnestly, and there was almost as much surprise as pleasure expressed in that earnest look.

"How comes it, my dear child, that a young creature like you, in all the bright heyday of youth, beauty, and wealth, how comes it that your heart opens to me, like that of a child to its parent, while the hearts of my two sisters, the playfellows and companions of my youth, are closed against me? You have never seen nor known me, Judith. How is it that you love me?"

"Do not say that I have not known you, aunt Penelope!" replied Judith, so eagerly

that her vehemence almost choked her utterance. "You do my darling mother great injustice in saying that! I do know you. I have known you all my life, and next to her dear self, and my poor father, I have loved you best. If my sweet mother had been spared to me, and Charles had been brought to see her, would he have felt that she was a stranger to him? that he was a stranger to her? No, no, no, I won't believe it. I will not think so hardly of you, aunt Worthington."

"She is right, dearest mother!" said Charles. If I had found your dearly beloved sister Judith seated on a throne of gold, with a footstool of ivory and a crown of diamonds, I certainly should have taken the liberty of loving her, in spite of all disparities. Yes, Miss Maitland is quite right in that. But, nevertheless, it makes a dreadful difference, an awful chasm!"

Judith burst into tears. "If he calls me Miss Maitland," said she, "I shall understand perfectly well the sort of intercourse he wishes to establish between us. But he knows not, he cannot know, how very cruel this is! He does not, and cannot know, that after passing

almost every hour of my life by the side of a mother, as dear to me as you are to him, I was sent over to a new cold world, where the only relations I found were two maiden aunts,—the sisters of my mother, but no more like my mother than I to Hercules. And now—now that I have found the only—" And here the sobs of the impetuous Judith stopped her, from the absolute necessity of taking breath, an interval of which her repentant cousin took advantage; for, with a look that seemed hovering between tragedy and comedy, he came to her, took one of her little hands between both of his, and said, " Now, now I will never call you Miss Maitland more!"

CHAPTER III.

THIS sally at once seemed to set everything right between them, and the joyous smile with which Judith pronounced his pardon, and, as she said, accepted his sworn allegiance, brought an answering smile to the still lovely features of Mrs. Worthington.

"What a strange transition does this little magical half-hour seem to have made in my destiny!" said she, looking with proud fondness in the beautiful face of her niece.

"And what a strange girl you must be to have produced such an effect!" said Charles, also looking earnestly at her; but there was

less of unqualified admiration, and more of saucy criticism in his glance.

"I wish you were not so superlatively elegant," said he.

"I have told you that it was not my fault," replied Judith, meekly.

"As you have forbade his being ceremonious, my dear child," said Mrs. Worthington, "you are very likely to find him saucy,—particularly in the article of costume, for he fancies that, because he is an artist, he has a right to criticise everthing he sees."

"Yes, I know he is an artist!" said Judith, colouring.

On seeing which, Charles Worthington coloured too, and the feeling which caused him to do so showed him to be most profoundly ignorant of all that was going on in the heart of Judith. She already knew him a vast deal better than he knew her.

"Yes! you are an artist, Charles," said she, fixing her eyes more earnestly upon him than she had yet done, and calling to her memory the foreheads of all the artists whose portraits she remembered—Titian, Salvator, Vandyke, Raffael, all rising in succession before her.

"Yes," she repeated, "I know he is an artist; and if he had not been one, I should never have found my way hither."

"As how?" said Mrs. Worthington. "Charles has scarcely made a single acquaintance in London. You surely have not seen any one who mentioned him to you as an artist, Judith."

"No, aunt Penelope, no ; that was not the way. But I saw a drawing that told me something about him. I am just come from the Royal Academy."

"Was I not inspired when I made you send in that little Piazza di Spagna sketch ?" said Mrs. Worthington. "Then the drawing pleased you, Judith, and you looked in the catalogue for the name ?" she added.

"Exactly so, my dearest aunt," replied Judith. "There was inspiration on his part, and on yours too, I think."

"Inspiration on my part ?" said Charles, looking at her with a very evident inclination to laugh. "Are you too an artist, Judith ? Or, are you only an amateur ?"

"Only an amateur," replied Judith, rather gravely.

"But you must have had a quick eye to notice that little thing," said Mrs. Worthington. "I own I thought it exceedingly clever myself."

"To you it was as a grandchild, my dear mother. To Judith, only a first cousin once removed," said Charles.

"Nevertheless, it looks very much like the instinctive tenderness of natural affection, her first looking at so very obscure a little drawing, and then seeking for the name of the artist. Does it not, mother?" said Charles, looking exceedingly pleased.

"It would be a vast deal more civil, cousin Charles, if you said that my notice of it displayed a sort of kindred taste for the art," said Judith.

Young Worthington looked at her for an instant as if he had some notion of answering her seriously, and perhaps of inquiring whether she really did care any thing about art, or not. But if any such thought occurred to him he dismissed it, and replied, "Yes, Judith dear, that would have been the pretty thing to say."

"You idle children!" said Mrs. Worthington, looking at them both affectionately, "might one not think that, instead of our having ten

thousand important questions to ask, and answer, you two had as much right to sit and talk nonsense as your two mothers had before ye ? Be rational, Charles, if you can, and let our Judith tell us where she is, and what chance there may be of her being permitted to cheer us occasionally with her company. Are you living with Barbara and Elfreda, my dear child ?”

“I have been living with both,” replied Judith, “but I took them by instalments. Do you not know, aunt Penelope, that they have ceased to live together ?”

“No, Judith, I neither know that, nor any thing else concerning them. They have both treated me from the hour of my marriage with great harshness ; and when I wrote to them on the death of my dear husband, I received from each a ceremonious note, hoping that I should soon reconcile myself to a loss that was inevitable, but expressing their fears that I should scarcely be likely to find the project of returning to my native country answer, (which I had mentioned as one of the schemes which had suggested itself as a means of educating my son,) because, as far as they were

concerned, they could give me no assistance whatever, as everything connected with art, and artists, was (naturally) distasteful to them. These epistles were evidently written in concert, and here ended my correspondence with them."

"And anything very like affectionate correspondence ended soon after between the two spinsters," said Judith. "I rather suspect that they quarrelled a little, too, about me ; but this matter was settled by its being arranged that I was to divide my time between them ; this friendly compact was speedily deranged again by—— But it is too long a story to tell you now, my dearest aunt. You shall hear that and everything else that concerns me, when we have more leisure. The thing that presses now, is the great question as to how I am to get at you, and be with you, according to what I flatter myself will be your wish as well as mine."

"It would indeed be dreadful after finding you, and thus finding you, my Judith, to lose you again. But if you are living with my sisters, or with either of them, be very sure that they will use whatever authority is vested

in them to prevent our meeting," said Mrs. Worthington; and the flushing of her pale cheek as she spoke told more plainly than her words how much she dreaded the influence of any such power.

"Fear it not, aunt Worthington! fear it not!" returned Judith, firmly. "Neither one nor both of them have any such authority; but, on the contrary, the very holiest authority that can by possibility control me expressly commands me to find you, and to cherish you. The last written and the last spoken words of my dearest mother were to that effect. And where do you think the power is to come from, that I shall think of sufficient authority to make me disobey these dying injunctions?"

"Did she, my dear child,—did my poor dear Judith think of me so fondly to the very last?" said Mrs. Worthington, deeply affected.

"Of all she said on that and many other subjects we will both wring and comfort our hearts by recalling, but what she wrote is safely treasured for your inspection. And I have other things treasured for you, too," said Judith, suddenly recollecting the casket of jewels which had heretofore so troubled her,

but of which she now thought with exceeding joy. “I have diamonds for you, aunt Penelope, worth many hundred pounds. And there is one, the finest of all, that mamma said was quite a famous stone; that, too, is very safe, and it is the property of cousin Charles.”

“Hundreds?” was the only word uttered by Mrs. Worthington, in reply to this communication, and it was murmured in a low whisper; but her hands were clasped, as in strong emotion, a bright colour mounted to her cheeks, and her tearful eyes were raised to heaven with an expression of solemn thankfulness.

“Mother!” ejaculated Charles, approaching her, as if frightened by her evident emotion.

“It will save us from all the horrors that were impending over us, my child!” said the agitated mother, seizing his hand, and pressing it to her heart. And then turning to Judith, she added, “I must make you know some day or other all the depth of the misery from which you have saved us,—from which my poor dear Judith’s generous kindness has saved us! You found us very, very wretched, my dear

girl; but you will leave us happy—first, from having found one dear kind being among our kindred who does not shrink from owning us; and next, from giving us hope that we may be relieved from a weight of debt that seemed as if it must crush us for ever!"

Judith was too young to appreciate very clearly the degree of poverty to which some hundreds of pounds could bring relief; she only felt the deep delight of having been the agent in doing what she knew her lost mother would have so greatly rejoiced to do. Nor was that all her joy. Her young heart had seemed to die within her, as by degrees the terrible truth had been forced upon her that it was impossible she could love either of the aunts to whose care she had been consigned, and who, nevertheless, had seemed to constitute all that was left to her very loving heart as objects of natural affection.

But now, short as the time had been for bringing such a discovery to perfection, Judith felt, beyond the shadow of doubt, that she had found in Mrs. Worthington one whom she could cling to, love, and venerate like her own mother. This joy was greater to Judith than

it could have been to any one who had not suffered as much as she had done for the want, the hopeless want of it. She felt as if she had not wholly lost her mother.

But even at the very moment that she was looking and feeling the very perfection of heartfelt enjoyment, the loud clock of some neighbouring tower swung out the disagreeable announcement that it was two hours past the noon of day; in short, that within one quarter of an hour the time would arrive at which she had promised Mrs. Dorking to be in perfect readiness to attend her upon some very particularly important visit, when she was to be honoured by permission to present herself to some very magnificent lady, who had promised to arrange a regular admission to Almack's for her.

The success of the negotiation which had led to this most triumphant *dénouement*, had been long doubtful; and the immense importance that seemed to be attached to it had led Judith herself to take a degree of interest in the business, which now seemed to her too contemptible to deserve a thought.

But, nevertheless, this feeling could not

authorize her breaking any engagement with Mrs. Dorking. She knew it, she felt it, and she positively groaned under the conviction.

"I must go!" she cried, suddenly starting from the place into which she had nestled herself beside her aunt on the dirty little sofa. "Oh, aunt Penelope! It is dreadful to go away when I have so many things to say. But I **MUST** go. I cannot explain to you now how very necessary it is; but you shall know, it by and by. Only tell me now when I may come again?"

"When, Judith? Ever and always, dearest! I have no engagements, and Charles not many."

"But what are we to do about aunt Elfreda?" said Judith. "Do you not mean to see her?"

"Will she *let* me see her, Judith? That is the question. Do you feel capable of answering it?"

"Let Judith go, mamma, without attempting to answer it," said Charles, who read in the flushed cheek and agitated manner of his cousin that there was some stringent reason for her immediately going, "and let the

answer to this tremendous question be arranged at her next visit."

"Good!" replied his mother. "Let it be so, dearest Judith. This will give me time to think about it."

"To-morrow morning, then," said Judith, hastily yet most tenderly embracing her.

"To-morrow morning, dearest," was the reply; and then Judith turned with a hurried step to leave the room, offering to shake hands with her cousin as she did so.

"May I not put you into your carriage, Judith?" he said, colouring, and looking rather anxiously in her face for permission.

Judith gave a glance at his costume, and then, instead of taking her offered hand, he withdrew himself by a quick movement, and began arranging some papers on a table.

But Judith, with all her dutiful eagerness to wait upon her rather imperious mother-in-law elect, was not to be so parted from her newly found cousin. She therefore turned after him, and putting her hand on his shoulder, she looked playfully in his face, and said, "Charles Worthington, listen to me, for I am in a great hurry. If you and I put our heads together,

and never quarrel, never get into a pet with one another about any thing, I think, in the end, we may be able to manage this aunt Elfreda of ours, who is a more terrible dragon to me, remember, than she ever can be to you, for she has got a legal power over me, and may lock me up, I believe, if she likes it. So you must submit, for my sake, dearest cousin, to be careful and cautious. That dress of yours looks classical, very, and, upon the whole, I think it is rather picturesque, BUT you must not let my footman Thomas see you in it *as yet*."

There was considerable tact, considerable appreciation of character, manifested by Judith in this address, and it was all wanted; for had she failed in making him feel that they were conspiring together against their spinster aunt, Judith's dread of the effect of his working dress upon her footman might have been very fatal to the affectionate feeling she was so anxious to immediately establish between them. But as she had managed it, all was well, and he saw her depart down the dark stairs alone, exactly in the frame of mind that she wished to leave him in.

CHAPTER IV.

BUT what a strangely-altered creature was Judith when she entered her carriage, from what she had been when she entered it last. Every object she cast her eyes upon seemed changed ; her estimate of all things seemed changed too. Every thing that had seemed of the most extreme importance to her yesterday, all appeared too contemptibly trivial to-day to merit a thought. A species of awe, and it must be confessed that it was of rather a childish kind, still made her feel anxious not to keep Mrs. Dorking waiting. But as to all the rest, as to the importance of the business they were going upon, the value of its success,

or the vexation that would be caused by its failure, her estimate of the whole thing was so completely changed, that she would have found it difficult, had she set about it, even to recall what her feelings on the matter had really been the day before. But it was not thus she employed herself during the whole of her rather long drive from Newman to Green Street.

She did not forget Mrs. Dorking, but she very soon forgot the peeress she was to be taken to visit; she forgot Almack's, too, and all things connected with it.

Her whole heart and soul were full of her aunt Worthington and her concerns. Her delicate health, her obvious poverty, the deep distress of which she had spoken, all pressed upon her heart, and caused a sensation of deeper anxiety than she had ever felt before.

"Oh, my poor mother!" she murmured; "how right were you in lamenting your inability to divide the fortune left to me! How gladly, oh! how joyfully, would I share it with them, had I the power. But the time will come."

But as this thought arose, another followed

it, and a most strange medley of emotions came after.

Till that moment, Judith had never given a serious thought to all the business part of a matrimonial connexion. She knew that she had plenty of money, and she knew that her dear Frederic had plenty of money also, and, moreover, that he was to have a great deal more by and by. She knew all this very perfectly well, and, as far as she had ever thought about it at all, she thought it was very nice.

But till the very present moment of which we are speaking, it had never entered her head to ask herself if she should, out of all this, have any independent power of doing good to any one. Decidedly one of the greatest pleasures she had felt, on arriving from her residence in London, had been created by the satisfaction, and the amusement also, of seeing poor Miss Tollbridge gradually growing comfortable in her little domicile; but her liberal good nature on this occasion had never exceeded in its expense the trifling amount that any person of good fortune might naturally think themselves en-

titled to command for such a purpose, whether married or single. But now the case was widely different. The nearest and dearest kindred she had in the world were evidently suffering from great poverty; and the question she now asked herself was, whether her engagement to Frederic Dorking had for ever put it out of her power to give them effectual and permanent assistance.

She was no great lawyer, but yet she knew enough to feel pretty uncomfortably sure that it had, and for a moment or two she felt most profoundly miserable; the tears ran unchecked down her cheeks, and her bosom heaved with sighs that amounted very nearly to sobs; nor was it till her carriage had reached that corner of Grosvenor Square which was nearest to her aunt's lodgings, that the bright idea occurred to her that her dear Frederic, who was every thing most perfect in man, would unquestionably become as much attached to the only relations she had, whom she should even ask him to love, as she was herself.

"Dear, dear Frederic!" she exclaimed, as the carriage stopped at her aunt's door.
"How shamefully unjust I have been to doubt

him even for a moment; or, rather, how worse than unjust was I for a single moment to forget him!"

This set every thing right again in that gay and innocent young heart; and when she learned from Miss Elfreda's footman that Mrs. Dorking's carriage had not yet been there, she felt herself so infinitely relieved, that she was quite ready to declare herself fearless of the future in all ways, and perfectly certain that Frederic and herself would make one of the happiest couples in the world, despite all the finery of his relations and the poverty of her's.

Mrs. Dorking came at last full of apologies for being so unpunctual, and seeing the apologies received with such radiant good humour by Judith, she felt more than ever inclined to rejoice at the happy series of accidents which had led Frederic to choose a wife, who besides the pleasant advantage of possessing two thousand a-year, was one of those tempers that one can do any thing with, if one does but set about it in the right way.

There was one peculiarity in the system of Miss Elfreda Jenkyns, in her code of spinster

government, which proved at this time a very great accommodation to Judith. The principle which she made the leading star of her guardian tactics was this,—that her management should be in all respects as great a contrast to that of her sister Barbara as possible. She knew, by tolerably long experience, that the ways and manners of Miss Barbara (excepting in the special case of Dr. Wroughtley) were always cold, and often repulsively harsh, especially to young people ; and it was for this reason that she had assumed in her manner to Judith a tone so caressing as to require the use of all the “angels” and “darlings” that have been repeated after her.

Another of Miss Barbara’s characteristics was the fidgety curiosity which propelled her to inquire into every body’s “whereabouts,” so as to make it nearly impossible for any of her acquaintance to perform any of the usual affairs of life, without Miss Barbara’s making herself acquainted with the why, how, and where.

Now Miss Elfreda perfectly well remembered how very much she used to hate this herself in days of yore, and to “avoid it

altogether," in her own conduct towards the *precious Judith*, was her earnest wish and constant study.

Hitherto this had been of but little importance to her young ward, but now she felt it to be invaluable.

It was not that Judith had the slightest intention of making any mystery about the near and dear relations she had been so fortunate as to stumble upon ; but after all that had passed between the two aunts now in London, it could not have failed to be very embarrassing had it been the habit of Elfreda to cross-examine her niece upon the sayings and doings of every passing day.

At the present moment, in particular, when Mrs. Worthington had so reasonably asked for time for a little consideration respecting the future, it would have been very difficult to obtain it for her, had the elder sister been the guardian for the time being instead of the younger.

And most thankful was Judith for it, and deeply did she bless the arrangement which left her the entire control over the carriage during the early part of the day ; for she

knew it would enable her on the morrow, and on many subsequent morrows, to devote herself for three good hours, at the very least, to her dearly cherished aunt Penelope, and to the heart-full of new feelings, new interests, and new pleasures which this dear and close alliance would bring about.

Miss Elfreda had on that evening an engagement to one of the very pleasant *soirées*, four of which were given every season at the house of Mr. Carey, the celebrated lecturer ; and Judith had anticipated this engagement which occurred once a fortnight with much pleasure, Frederic Dorking having promised to avail himself of Miss Elfreda's interest in procuring him an invitation.

But every thing seemed to favour Judith as if Fate had taken pity on the over-excited state of her spirits, for while the aunt and niece were at dinner, a note was given to Judith from her *fiancé*, begging her to make his apologies, both to Miss Elfreda and the Carey family, for being unable to keep his engagement.

For her own particular share, he added all that could be said of tenderest, and prettiest, on such a theme.

Had nothing particular occurred that morning to Judith, this might perchance have vexed her; but as it was, she hailed Frederic's imperative engagement, let it be what it might, as a real blessing. And thus, for probably the first time in her life, she affected what she did not feel, and played a little comedy of being vexed as she asked her aunt Elfreda to excuse her too.

Miss Elfreda's part upon this, as upon all other occasions, was that of the perfect species of maiden aunt, which never permits itself to be in the way on any occasion, and whose only perceptible object in life is to do every thing it is wanted to do, and no more.

On receiving this petition from Judith for leave of absence, she nodded, and smiled, and winked a good deal, but never uttered a syllable by way of remonstrance; the only words, in fact, which she uttered being, " You darling angel! every thing you do is exactly what you ought to do!"

And when this most amiable of maiden aunts was gone, did not poor Judith enjoy her solitude? How quietly delicious, and how deliciously quiet was her solitary tea! And, in

truth, if the having much interesting matter to think of can make solitude valuable, that of Judith must needs have been so.

It required no great continuity of meditation, however, to make her decide that her mother's darling sister Penelope was not to continue in such a state of utter discomfort as she had found her. "No! not if I beg alms for her, and myself too, to prevent it!" was her mental exclamation.

But the manner how, and the means by which, this continuance of poverty was to be cured, were points of greater difficulty.

Even if she had not been engaged to be married to dear Frederic Dorking, she would, for four years to come, be as helpless as to any power of giving them effectual assistance, as she was now.

What then was to be done? They were in distress, in positive pecuniary distress, nay, moreover, they were in debt; and the grief and anxiety arising from this, was killing her aunt Penelope!

"And what resources have I at my command?" was the pertinent question that Judith asked herself. "I have three hundred

a-year for my private expenses, one half of which I have agreed to make over to my aunt Elfreda, in addition to the six hundred she receives for me, in consideration of my having a carriage, horses, coachman, footman, and maid at my command. And these luxuries are not too highly paid for, Mrs. Chilbert says. It follows, then, that all I can convert to the use of my poor suffering aunt, is just the paltry trifle I may be able to save from the clutches of Milleners and Co. This will not do, most elegant, and most indulgent aunt Elfreda ! If I consent to roll about behind the shadow of my rose-coloured blinds, with a fine coachman before, a fine footman behind, and a fine maid to relieve me from the burden of my mantle when I re-enter my room, while my own dear mother's own dear sister is living in such a room as that which I have seen to-day, may I perish by the slow agony of starvation on a bed of straw!"

Such were the energetic words into which the thoughts of Judith formed themselves, as she thus sat in solitary meditation in her aunt Elfreda's drawing-room. And the firmness of the resolution, thus firmly expressed,

did her good. It was as if she had found a friend to help her in the work she meant to undertake.

And she had found a friend ; she had found one in herself, in her own honest earnestness, in the conscious righteousness of her object, and in the resolute strength of purpose with which she meant to put it in practice.

But her solitary musings did not come to an end here, nor was it time they should, for all the detail difficulties of the business were still to be thought of, and provided for, and few young ladies, rising seventeen, are likely to find this task much easier than poor Judith did.

The putting down the carriage, and dismissing the two men servants, would have gone far towards achieving all she wished to achieve at the present moment.

“ When I am of age,” thought she, “ my beloved Frederic will, I feel quite sure, enable me to put every thing on a proper footing at once. But I cannot deal with the Lord Chancellor, whom aunt Barbara was so fond of talking about, as I could with my dear

Frederic. So, for a real settling of every thing, we must wait, at least till I am married. But what is to be done meanwhile? What is to be done immediately?"

Something like a vision of the face, form, attitude, and voice of the elegant Mrs. Dorking, upon being informed that the honoured *protégée*, who was one day to become her still more honoured daughter, had discovered some poor relations, on whose account she had decided upon giving up her carriage,—something like a vision of this kind seemed to rise to her mind's eye, but she did not quail before it, for Dr. Wroughtley was right; there was a good deal of self-willed determination about Judith.

Moreover, she had common sense enough to tell her, that her soft darling and angel-tongued aunt Elfreda might be a much more troublesome obstacle to her plans than Mrs. Dorking.

The allowance made for her accommodation was, of course, to be expended according to the judgment of her appointed guardian; and though Miss Elfreda's judgment had suggested to her a much more liberal style of expendi-

ture than that adopted by her aunt Barbara, she had no great reason to believe that she would be more docile in giving up the carriage, than her aunt Barbara would have been in keeping one.

And then the poor harassed girl's fancy fixed itself on all that might be, and all that certainly would be, if Elfreda would only consent to receive and treat Mrs. Worthington like a sister! How comfortably might they all live together! If London were too costly, why not remove into the country? And for a few short minutes, Judith sat smiling at the pretty picture she was drawing for herself, with a cottage sort of home, large enough to give a studio to Charles, and with cows, and chickens, and a pony-carriage!

But she misdoubted her fond aunt Elfreda in her heart. And she soon gave up the cottage project with a hopeless sigh.

Her thoughts then turned to Frederic Dorking, to her affianced husband, and there they fixed themselves.

The more she meditated, the more she became convinced that it was to him she ought to look for assistance. From him she ought to

have no secrets, and she would have none. Every part of his conduct had given her the strongest reason to have faith in his affection, his disinterestedness, and his generosity. She could want no other friend than him, and she would seek no other.

Her spirits rose as she thought of all this. Here there could be no harshness, no attempt at severe authority. The pleasure of doing all she proposed to do would be equally great to all the parties concerned, and the happiness of all the inevitable result.

Having come at length to this most comfortable conclusion, she very rationally determined to go to bed, and did so, just in time to escape Miss Elfreda's raptures on the delightful evening she had passed, surrounded by every thing that could make life desirable, and in the society of men who really made one feel proud of belonging to the same species.

CHAPTER V.

THE faithful carriage of Judith, the carriage that the poor girl was so heartily anxious to get rid of, arrived punctually at ten o'clock according to her orders; but it wanted at least ten minutes of that time when Judith re-entered her room after breakfast, and having dismissed her maid, took from the deepest recess of her best locked trunk the precious casket that we described her as keeping guard over, six or seven months before, at the railway hotel, when waiting to take her departure thence for Southampton with her aunt Barbara.

Judith was as jealous about this casket now,

as she was then ; and in order to prevent the possibility of its being carried down stairs by any officious domestic who might come to announce the carriage, she stood with it in her arms at the open window, ready to start the instant that the said carriage turned the corner round which she knew it must come in its way from the mews.

By this precaution, she succeeded in placing herself and her treasure safely in the vehicle, without a single confidant in the manœuvre, except the footman, who was so far made a party as to lend his hand in placing the heavy little box upon the seat.

This done, she quietly named the number and the street of her aunt Worthington's residence, with a feeling of happiness at her heart powerful enough in its youthful brightness to render her perfectly blind to all the difficulties which still lay in her way, before that dearly beloved aunt could be placed as much beyond the reach of poverty, as it was her steadfast resolve to place her.

Punctual as was the moment of Judith's arrival to the promise she had given, she did not come before she was eagerly expected ;

but yet, when she did come, both mother and son were ready to confess that she was come before they had dared to hope for her.

The opening of the casket added little, or indeed nothing, to the information which Judith had already given them respecting its contents ; for neither of the party had the slightest idea of their value, beyond what they had received from the dying statements of Judith's mother. This, however, was enough to make the poor widow feel, as she received them, that she and her son were saved, at least for the present, from a pressure more severe than either of them wished to communicate to the bright-spirited, warm-hearted, and affectionate young creature who had seemed to come upon them like an angel of light.

“Oh ! how thankful I am to have delivered it safe at last !” exclaimed Judith, playfully laying her aunt's hand upon it, in an attitude of possession. “ You know not how sorely it has troubled me,—or rather, how sorely I have been troubled by so long seeking in vain for the dear being who was to replace my mother. But I will not complain. Perhaps I should not have enjoyed my happiness

so much, had it come to me with no previous suffering."

"My dear, dear Judith!" cried Mrs. Worthington, looking at her with fond and melancholy recollection of the mother she so greatly resembled, "what is your happiness compared to mine? I fear I can bring little but sorrow and anxiety to you, while you bring to me all that is left on earth, except my poor boy, that I may dare to think of with affection."

"And do you, and will you, think of me with affection, aunt Penelope?" said Judith, tenderly embracing her. "You know not the happiness you make me feel in teaching me to hope for this! And you, too, Master Charles, you must love me, too, if you please. Do you like me to-day better than you did yesterday?" she added, standing up before him, and deliberately turning herself round for his inspection.

The meaning of which facetious manœuvr was explained by the fact, that the dress of Judith on this occasion was as studiously simple, though still elegant and costly, (for she had never had the means of dressing herself otherwise,) as yesterday it had been the reverse.

There are some ladies, though none, perhaps, quite so young as Judith, who seem to take extreme delight in the very act of dressing. I well remember having some years ago encountered a London *élégante* of the very first class three times, between the hours of two and seven, at three different places of fashionable morning resort, and, equally to my amusement and surprise, she appeared that morning in three completely different costumes.

That this lady found the act of dressing agreeable, cannot be doubted, but it was not so with Judith ; and therefore, when she took it into her busy little head the day before, that she should like to go herself and take Miss Tollbridge to the exhibition of the Royal Academy, she avoided the trouble of dressing a second time for her fine visit, by investing herself in the sort of morning attire which Mrs. Dorking had given her to understand she approved, before she set forth on her early expedition.

Now, considering that a strong partiality for a simple style of dress was one of Judith's most marked peculiarities, it certainly must have been rather vexatious to her to find herself re-

buked for being too fine at her very first interview with her artist cousin. And this was the reason why she now so humbly submitted herself to his critical scrutiny, in the hope of hearing that he thought her appearance improved.

Nor was she disappointed. Charles appeared to understand her challenge, and surveyed her with a very grave and critical eye.

"Yes," said he, "I like you better to-day than I did yesterday. At least, I like your dress better."

"Well! even that is a comfort," said Judith, laughing. "I dare say we shall get on together very well, in time."

"I dare say we shall, if you are attentive and obedient," he replied. "But look you here, cousin Judith!" And in saying this, he opened a book of sketches that lay, for want of a table, upon a deal plank, which he had very unceremoniously set up in their only sitting room to serve all the purposes of a library table, only that instead of the customary preparations for writing, all sorts of things preparatory to painting, and to drawing, were arranged upon it.

"Look here! Let me begin this branch of your education immediately. Instead of decking themselves with satin and lace, as you did yesterday, young girls should be attired in this fashion." And then he turned over, for her inspection, page after page of graceful and very spirited sketches, in which every variety of Greek and Italian costume recurred again and again in all the various groups with which the volume was filled.

There was a little curl on the lip of Judith as he turned the first pages of his book, proceeding probably from a feeling that her young cousin was supremely absurd in gravely recommending to a young lady living in England to deck herself in what certainly appeared to her to be the very prettiest fancy costumes that ever were seen; but before he had proceeded far, his mother called to him, and instantly obeying her call, he laid the open book on the deal board before his cousin, and left her.

Judith seized upon it eagerly, and began most completely to enjoy herself; and, in truth, it was a volume that might have charmed a more experienced eye, and a more

learned taste, than those of Judith; for it had that unforgeable *timbre* which no sketch-book, save that of a born and bred artist, ever had. Every line, nay, every dot, had its especial mission; and yet the things, for the most part, looked as if they had been thrown upon the pages more in sport than in study.

But Judith was not quite unworthy of the indulgence either; and though she could by no means expatiate in artistic phrase upon the especial touches that so enchanted her, she felt a charm to which her organization rendered her peculiarly alive; and before Charles returned to the deal board, and its fair visitor, her estimate of her cousin's talent as an artist had reached a very high point.

"Heyday! Miss Judith, what are you doing there? Nobody, not even my mother, I believe, ever took such liberties with my sketch-book as you seem to be taking now. Why you are looking at every thing!"

"And I always shall look at every thing in every sketch-book that you put into my hands, cousin Charles," replied Judith, without raising her eyes from the book, and preparing

herself very comfortably to go on with her examination of it.

"But do you not know that you are at this moment rifling, in a most unwarrantable manner, the storehouse of my most secret thoughts and reveries?" said Charles, bending his brows upon her with an awful frown.

"And very pretty thoughts and reveries they are; and I give you notice that, if you mean to keep them secret from me, you must put them completely and effectually out of my reach," replied Judith. But though the remonstrances of her cousin did not stop her, her conscience did; and suddenly closing the volume, she said, "You have a right to be angry with me, dearest aunt, though he has not. Did I not come here to talk to you on subjects most vitally important to us all? And this is the way I do it!"

"Come here, then, dearest, and sit by me," returned her aunt, "and we will waste no more time at present on the study of costumes. Of course you have said nothing about us, as yet, to my sister Elfreda?"

"Not a syllable," replied Judith. "But I have been thinking a great deal about it; and

it seems to me, aunt Worthington, that the proper thing to do is to tell her at once that you are here. Let us hope that she will be too wise to recur to any thing painful that has passed between you formerly. *You*, I am quite sure, are too good and too kind to do it. And if this can be altogether avoided, I see not why every thing may not go on smoothly amongst us all."

"I would fain believe it possible, dearest, and it shall not be my fault, Judith, if it prove otherwise. But even if she should refuse to see me herself, she surely will not have the cruelty of using her authority in any way that may prevent my seeing you."

"She would find that a very difficult task indeed," said Judith, laughing, "for, perhaps it is as well for you to know it at once, I am a very self-willed, obstinate, sort of person. I do not believe that I would willingly commit any very great sin; but, all jesting apart, I am conscious of a very strong feeling within me of resistance against what I think to be an unreasonable use of authority. For instance, I have it here, under my dear mother's own hand, that it is her earnest and her dying

wish that I should seek you, and love you. Now I know of no authority under heaven, aunt Penelope, which could exonerate me from the moral necessity of obeying this command, and I will obey it, to the very utmost extent of my power."

Both her auditors had been looking at her earnestly as she said this. Her aunt drew her towards her, threw her arms round her neck, and kissed her fondly.

Charles turned suddenly away, and occupied himself by arranging the miscellaneous articles upon his deal board.

"I would not urge, nor even encourage you in rebellion to any constituted authority to which you are submitted, my dearest Judith," replied her aunt, "but it surely is a great, as well as a greatly needed comfort, to hear you express yourself so affectionately towards me; and I certainly feel, as you do, that your mother's wishes will more than justify some resistance to any authority that may attempt to keep you from me. But before we think of resistance, let us think of conciliation. How shall I set about it, Judith? Should I call upon her?"

"Will you promise not to think me very impertinent, if I tell you how I think it all ought to be?" said Judith, colouring, and looking really ashamed of the presumption.

"Your being young, and my being old, my child, has less to do in assigning us our respective parts on this occasion, than the circumstance of your knowing how things stand here, and my not knowing," replied Mrs. Worthington.

That is what I feel about it, aunt," returned Judith, with an air of great contentment, "and if cousin Charles will amuse himself by taking a walk the while, for we must positively have a *tête-à-tête*, I will open all my plans to you."

Charles turned round, and gave her rather a reproachful look, that seemed to say that he too should like to listen to her plans; but, nevertheless, he kissed his hand very gaily and gallantly, and then vanished.

"Now then, my sweet girl!" said Mrs. Worthington, placing the one crazy-looking footstool so as to assist them both in the difficult task of not slipping off the horse-hair sofa. "Now then!"

CHAPTER VI.

"Now then, dear 'aunt !'" said Judith, yielding herself, and with tolerable success too, to the hospitable effort of making her comfortable. "Now then ! I think we are very snug, and I think I shall have courage to tell you everything."

"Courage !" said Mrs. Worthington, with a look and tone of surprise.

"Do not be frightened," returned Judith, laughing. "It is nothing very bad, I believe ; indeed, every body tells me it is quite the contrary. But in any case, aunt Penelope, the truth is, that I am going to be married."

Fortunately the eyes of Judith were fixed

on the floor when she said this. Had she been looking in her aunt's face she must have perceived a look of blended surprise and sorrow.

" You are young, my Judith ! you are very young to rush upon all the troubles of life already," said she.

" Oh, yes ; I am too young," replied Judith, " and for that reason I am not going to be married for several months yet. I am not to be married till I am in my eighteenth year, and that, you know, won't be so very, very early. But I do assure you that it is the very luckiest thing in the world, for Frederic Dorking—that is his name, aunt—Frederic Dorking loves me much too dearly not to rejoice at my having found you. He knows full well how I have longed to do so."

" Well, my sweet girl, if he loves you, and you love him, I must, perforce, rejoice that so it is to be," said her aunt, making an effort to recover herself, both from her astonishment and a sort of feeling of having again in some sort lost the sweet creature she had so lately found.

And now Judith, the ice being broken, went on to detail the plans she had concocted over her solitary tea the evening before.

She felt, poor child, that till she knew her aunt's actual position as to her present means of existence, she could not explain her own plans very fully ; but she ventured to say that it was evident to her, that it had now become her duty to spend her money more carefully, for that she was quite sure that neither she, nor dear Charles had as much as they ought to have.

" You shall know every thing, Judith ; and one great use of this will be the proving to you, my dear child, that you must not dream of injuring your own fortune,—which, indeed, you have no longer any right to do,—by any attempt to improve ours. All that is really and immediately distressing in our situation will, I hope and expect, be relieved by the sale of the jewels which you have brought to us at a most critical moment ; and as to our subsequent position, I flatter myself that, young as you are, I shall be able to make you understand that any attempt on your part to alter that would be exceedingly unwise,

and, what is still more to the purpose, utterly vain."

For a minute or two Judith was profoundly silent, but, judging from the expression of her features, her thoughts were not idle; and there was a contraction of the brow, a heightening of complexion, and a sort of resolution in the eye that might have made one wish that she would have broken the silence, for there was evidently a great deal passing within.

After this minute or two, she seemed to think that her aunt was expecting her to speak, and she therefore said, in a very gentle, docile, lady-like tone, "Tell me at once, aunt Penelope, all that you think it right for me to know, and then I will tell you all that I know myself."

"I might make a long story of it, my dear child, but I will not. If we have future opportunities of conversing together, I may enter more into detail," said Mrs. Worthington.

"*If!*" said Judith, with a still greater contraction of her brow.

"I said *if*, dearest, because I have lived

long enough to know the extreme uncertainty of every thing," replied Mrs. Worthington.

"I have not lived very long, certainly," returned Judith, by no means relaxing the stern expression of her youthful face, "but I feel very strongly persuaded that all the things that happen in this world are not left to chance ; no, nor to the special intervention of Providence over-ruling them either. I feel strongly persuaded, aunt Worthington, that God, who has done nothing in vain, would not put into our hearts so much sincerity of purpose, so much steadfastness of resolution, if he denied us all power of influencing the result."

Mrs. Worthington looked at her earnestly for a moment, and smiled. " You are very like your dear mother," said she ; " but yet I doubt if you are like her in all ways. She was the most yielding creature I ever knew. What was the temper of your father, Judith ?"

" My father was a very resolute person," said Judith, colouring. " But pray go on, aunt ; I have interrupted you."

" You know, at least, the beginning of my

history," said Mrs. Worthington ; "you know that I eloped with my drawing-master. I should be very sorry to hear that you, Judith, or any other young person for whom I was interested, had eloped with any one ; but, notwithstanding that I avow it to have been an indiscretion, I cannot but add that I never, during the life-time of my husband, regretted for a single moment that I had become his wife."

"Then your steadfastness of purpose was rewarded," said Judith.

Mrs. Worthington smiled, but shook her head, as she replied, "The punishment came after ! While my dear husband lived, I really believe I was as perfectly happy as it is possible for any human being to be. I gloried in his talent, which was appreciated by all the first judges in Rome, and during these years of happiness he might have realized much money, had the sale of his drawings been an important object. But it really was not, for my husband, who had not a vice in the world, nor even an amusement in which I did not share, was, as well as myself, perfectly satisfied with the income my fortune

brought us ; and it was only when he was anxious to procure me some particular indulgence, such as taking me to Venice, to Bologna, to Florence, to Naples, that we might enjoy the delight of seeing pictures together, it was only for such extra expenses as these that he would consent to sell his drawings at all ; and then the prices he obtained were very high. At last, however, these happy days came to a sudden check, arising from a speculation upon which he entered with more than his usual ardour, and less than his usual prudence. A collection of pictures, which had been brought to Rome by a bold and skilful adventurer, were exposed for sale, or rather were partially exposed for sale, for the proprietor, declaring that he knew his business too well to lower the market by over-stocking it, refused to show the entire collection to any one. Amongst those that were shown were some of very first-rate excellence, and for these great prices were offered by both Russian and English amateurs ; but these offers were refused, the owner declaring that it was not his purpose to sell the gems of his collection,

but one-third of the whole gallery *en masse*; and that it was not with Russian or English nobles that he wished to deal, but with professional men, whose object was to sell again, and who would know how to make the speculation answer, by exhibiting them throughout Europe first, and then throughout America.

This idea seized upon the imagination of my dear husband. Our son was already longing for an opportunity to travel, and he knew that I enjoyed nothing so much. In an evil hour he entered into a negotiation with the travelling picture-dealer, and was beguiled at length into taking the whole of his collection, on terms that certainly seemed most advantageous, but which nevertheless amounted, within a very few hundred pounds, to the whole of my fortune. The whole was accordingly sold out of the funds, and my husband became the possessor of a very large, but very miscellaneous gallery.

As long as the negotiation was pending, his eagerness about it prevented his paying any attention to minor details, or he might have perceived before it was concluded, what he speedily became aware of afterwards, namely,

that the first cost was not all the cost necessary to put his acquisition in a condition to render it profitable. Details on such a subject must be worse than useless, dear Judith. The result of it all was, that we not only spent the few hundreds that were left, but got very considerably in debt before the collection was brought into a condition to make any profit from it. Many of the pictures, though of great merit, were found to be in so deplorable a condition, that it was doubtful if they were capable of reparation. And then came—the last, worst blow of all! The fatigue, the anxiety, the doubt, were altogether too much for him. My husband died."

Judith, who knew that this catastrophe was to come, for the sad story was of course not wholly new to her,—had been watching her aunt with great anxiety; and not without cause, for she became as pale as death when she pronounced these last words, and the frightened girl thought she would have fainted.

But she recovered herself by a strong effort, and after the silence of a moment or two, she said, " You know all now, my dear child : the rest is comparatively nothing.

"The collection of pictures which caused all our misery is still at Rome. They have been seized for debts which I was totally unable to pay. We were enabled to make the journey hither, and to exist in this little lodging for the last few months, by the sale of—of what I never intended should be sold at all ; and now our future hopes rest, or rather did rest before the arrival of my poor sister's legacy, upon the hope that my poor Charles might sell some of his pretty, spirited sketches.

"But now, thank Heaven, and you, my dear child, all these minor sorrows are over, and we may fairly look forward to paying our Roman debts by the sale of these jewels, and then to the disposing of the pictures which are now detained from us for a sum that, with the aid of my boy's talent, may enable us to live. May we not in every way, my dearest Judith, bless the hazard that has brought you to us?"

"It was not altogether hazard, aunt Worthington. I am rather proud to think that my family-feeling for art had some thing to do with it. Had not that sketch of my dear clever cousin's delighted me, I should never have found out his name in the catalogue."

"And there is pleasure in that thought, too, Judith," said her aunt, looking at her very affectionately. "And now, my dear love," she continued, "you know every thing about us. It is now my turn to listen. Let me know every thing about you."

"And so you shall, aunt Penelope; my inclination, as well as my duty, will prevent my having any secrets from you. But before I begin this auto-biography, let me say one little word to you, not about my history, but myself. You told me just now that I was very young—too young to be married. I believe you are very right. I think it very possible that I am too young to be married; but I am not too young to feel, nor am I too young to know, that dearly as I love Frederic Dorking, and truly as I believe that he loves me, I would rather part with him to-morrow, with the certainty of never seeing him again, than continue to live as I am living *now*, while you are living, as you must be living *here*.

"Aunt Worthington, there is no use in arguing the matter," she added, perceiving that her aunt shook her head, and appeared to be about to interrupt her. "I know myself

better than you can know me, and, be it right or be it wrong, I have neither the will nor the power to arrest the movement which urges me to do what I am about to do. I will not tell you, my own dear mother's own sister, that you do not know how dear you were to her ; I will not tell you that, because it might be doing injustice to both of you; but I may, at least, tell you that it is impossible you can know how thoroughly she made me understandt hat you had ever been her second self,— her *second self*, aunt Worthington ! And if I feel this, if I feel it in the very depth of my heart and soul, would you tell me that I am to be waited upon like a duchess, clothed like a princess, and carried about in a fine equipage like an empress, while my dear mother's *other self* lives here ? No, no ! You would not tell me so, aunt Worthington. Nor, were the case reversed, would you tell my cousin Charles that he should so treat my mother.”

“ You are a strange girl, Judith !” said Mrs. Worthington, looking at her with almost as much curiosity as affection, “ and I protest I know not how to talk to you. Nevertheless

you will find it very difficult to persuade me that it would be right to permit you to give up your present place in society, which is yours, as I may say, by the express will of your father, in order to raise my son, and me, from that which is in truth ours. Cannot you understand me, Judith? Cannot you see the question in this light?"

"Yes, certainly I can," replied Judith, without the slightest hesitation; "and if you will not seek to dazzle and overwhelm me with your particular light, I think our respective illuminations may help each other, and that at last we shall both of us see this matter clearly. I have not the very least idea, my dearest aunt, of giving up the place in society which, as you truly say, I hold by the will of my father. Even if I were not going to marry a very wealthy man, I should not, according to my scheme, be in the least danger of doing this. I do not propose, aunt Worthington, to leave my present gay-looking, pretty home in order to take up my abode here. I know no reason whatever why I should do so. All I propose to do is, to furnish you with the means to live as my mother's second self ought

to live, until such time as your own resources may enable you to do so without assistance from me. And I am glad to say that, in order to do this, there will be no occasion for me to give up any thing except mere luxuries, which, as you well may guess, would be no longer luxuries to me, if the retaining them involved the necessity of your remaining in discomfort.

"The only possible difficulty in the business lies in the convincing my aunt Elfreda that, out of the six hundred a-year which she receives for my accommodation, she ought to permit me to dispose of about two hundred. If she will consent to this, I will take excellent care that she shall lose nothing by it. But I am quite ready to confess that I do not feel sure of her. However, I do feel sure that I shall find a friend in my dear Frederic, who will assist me in convincing her that I ask nothing that is unreasonable. But even at the very worst, aunt Worthington, I am already so far independent, that I can at least assist you to the amount of two hundred and fifty pounds a-year, which will be leaving me fifty for finery, a sum which, as Charles can

tell you, is greatly beyond what is necessary to enable me to dress according to his notions of good taste, and my own too.

“And now I must leave you, aunt Worthington, for I have a great deal to do. First, I must see my aunt Elfreda, and find what I can do with her, in the way of making her behave to you as she ought to do. Next I must see my dear Frederic, and there I anticipate nothing but sympathy and comfort. And then I must look for another lodging and a nice, comfortable servant for you. In short, I can stay chattering here no longer!—so good bye!”

“Stay, Judith, stay,” exclaimed her aunt, seriously alarmed at the energy with which she seemed disposed to settle everything her own way. “Indeed you must not be so impetuous.” But Judith, after for one moment throwing her arms round her, and pressing her lips upon her forehead, made her escape, and was not only at the bottom of the stairs, but actually in the carriage, before Mrs. Worthington had sufficiently recovered her composure to attempt making any effort to stop her.

CHAPTER VII.

JUDITH was by no means insensible to the fact, that her projects would not all be brought to perfection without some difficulty, but she felt strong in the conviction that her purpose was to do nothing but what was right ; and steadfast as she was in this purpose, it was with truly pious humility that she addressed a fervent prayer to Heaven for judgment to direct her in the difficult task that lay before her.

But in spite of all her courage, it may be doubtful whether she felt more sorry or more glad at being told, upon inquiring for her aunt Elfreda, that she was in the drawing-room, and alone.

She gave herself no time, however, to discuss this question, but breathing another prayer for success, she at once entered the room.

The fond relative she found there seemed enchanted by her unexpected arrival.

“ My lovely darling !” she exclaimed, “ this is a greater happiness than I had dared to hope for. Where has your young philosophy been leading you, dearest ? Not to the busy haunts of men, I hope, with that marvellously simple toilet ? Of course, you have had our good Tollbridge with you ? ”

“ My dearest aunt,” returned Judith, approaching her with a mixture of affection and solemnity in her manner, which was immediately felt by the puzzled spinster, “ my dear, dear aunt, if the news I bring you should create in your heart one-half of the joy it has created in mine, we shall be the happiest pair of ladies in London ! ”

“ What on earth can you mean, my beloved child ? Nothing has been said, has there ? Oh ! I dare not hope it. Nothing has been mentioned, my sweet Judith, about the possibility of *my* obtaining one ticket for Almack’s ? I did just breathe the longing wish I had for

it into the ear of your devoted Frederic, and he is such a very charming creature, that if it be possible to do it, I think it will be done by him. But don't keep me in suspense, my angel ! I shall positively die if you do."

" My dearest aunt," replied Judith, " I know not even what you mean; for I never heard the subject mentioned. I am quite sure, however, that should it be in the power of Frederic to oblige you in any way, he will only be too happy to do it."

" Angel !" ejaculated the grateful Miss Elfreda.

" But now, will you listen to me, aunt, about something very different, and, as I hope you will feel, much more important. My dear aunt Worthington, your long absent sister Penelope, and her son Charles, are in London."

To say that Miss Elfreda changed colour as she listened to these words, would be giving a very weak description of their effect upon her complexion. Her face, poor lady, positively became purple. She opened her eyes, and she opened her mouth also ; yet it was some seconds before she articulated the words, " God.

forbid!" which at length, however, burst from her gasping lips.

Judith had predetermined to be very patient, very gentle, and on no account to lose her temper; but these words went far towards making her forget all these good resolutions. If there had been any power of observation left in Miss Elfreda's glaring eyes, she might have perceived such a flash of indignation in the dark orbs of Judith, as might, perhaps, have quelled her courage a little. But as it was, she positively saw nothing, save the visions presented to her mind's eye, and the only image clearly discernible therein was that of Frederic Dorking leading Lady Katherine Wilmot (who was known to be violently in love with him) to the altar; while his mother stood staring at her luckless self, and cutting her dead, before the eyes of all the people of fashion who had ever spoken to her since her arrival in London! In short, both ladies were very vehemently agitated; but it was the younger one who recovered herself the first.

"Aunt Elfreda!" said she, with much solemnity, "we have been living together in great

harmony. Think twice, before you say anything about my aunt Worthington which may force me to quarrel with you!"

"Quarrel with me!" cried the ill-advised lady, with a most injudicious accent of contempt. "You have quarrelled with your other guardian already, Miss Judith, and your quarrelling with me won't enable you to throw off the authority of both."

"I have neither the wish nor intention of throwing off the authority of either," replied Judith, "as long as it is exercised in conformity to the declared will of my mother, from which same will it is alone derived.

"My aunt Barbara offended me by her insulting rudeness to Mr. Frederic Dorking, and a friend in whom I have all confidence advised me to leave her. But not either to that friend, or to any other, however near and dear to me, shall I apply for counsel as to how I shall comport myself towards the dear relative for whom my mother's dying words bespoke my utmost tenderness and duty. If you oppose my obeying these injunctions, I shall trust to Frederic Dorking's kindness to

making up his quarrel with aunt Barbara, and shall return to her immediately."

Judith was much too angry when she made this speech to calculate all the effect it was likely to produce ; but had she done so in her very coolest, wisest moment, it is impossible she could have hit on any line of argument so likely to convince her aunt Elfreda that she had better be quiet, than the one she had adopted.

The mention of Frederic Dorking, too, as an ally, had great effect ; for during the first distracting communication of the arrival of the ruined artist's widow, the only means that occurred to her of preventing the loss of the coronetted nephew, of whom she was thinking and dreaming both night and day, was to deny all knowledge of the Worthington name and race ; and to this means she would most assuredly have had recourse, would Judith have suffered it.

But now a new light broke in upon her. It was not, indeed, without a very dusky cloud surrounding it, but still she began to hope that the black night of hopeless, fashionless obscurity was not again to envelope her.

"Do not be so very hasty with me, my darling child!" cried the now admirably judicious Miss Elfreda, drawing forth her pocket handkerchief and pressing it to her eyes. "Surely you ought to know by this time, my beloved Judith, that your happiness, your gratification in all ways, is the chief object of my life; and if you perceived me shrink from the idea of seeing my poor imprudent sister Penelope, it was only because I feared that her arrival here might be injurious to your prospects."

"Then we are friends again, aunt Elfreda," said the placable Judith, holding out her hand in token of amity. "But as to my prospects," she added, after her hand was released from the almost convulsive grasp of her fond aunt, "as to my prospects, aunt Elfreda, be very sure that if any of the prospects to which I suspect you allude were to be changed by the arrival of my aunt Worthington, I should consider myself as one of the most fortunate people in the world for having escaped a connexion that must have been detestable to me. Besides, you do not suppose, do you, that even if my dear aunt had not arrived, I

should have married Frederic Dorking without his being made acquainted with her existence, and that of her son ? I have only waited to learn the result of the last inquiries I set on foot concerning them at Rome, in order to inform him of all I knew. And now, thank Heaven, instead of doing that which, if they had been still lost to me, would have been very painful, I shall have the extreme happiness of introducing two of the most charming people I have ever seen as among my nearest relations."

" You have already seen them, then, Judith ?" said Miss Elfreda, looking half curious and half terrified.

" Yes," replied Judith ; " and I trust that many hours will not elapse before you will have seen them also."

" Judith !" ejaculated Miss Elfreda, in an accent of great tenderness, " my affection for you really seems to triumph over every other feeling. Whatever my sister Barbara's faults may be in other matters, neither she nor I ought to be blamed for disapproving of Penelope's elopement. I do not believe that you will find any of your friends who will not tell

you, if they speak sincerely, that such a step was deserving of blame."

"I have no doubt of it," returned Judith; "nay, I have no doubt, either, that my aunt Penelope blames it herself. But that is not now the question. My part, in all that is to follow now, is clear enough, for nobody can doubt that it is my duty to obey my mother's last injunctions, and obey them I most certainly shall. Your conduct will, of course, be regulated according to your notions of what is right, as well as my own, and then, however much we may differ in practice, we shall at least agree in principle. Of course, too, I shall not presume to dictate to you in any way; I will only beg, as a matter of convenience, that you will let me know as soon as possible what your intentions are."

There was so much of quiet determination in the manner of the young Judith as she said this, that all idea of opposing her melted away from the soul of Miss Elfreda, like a morning mist before the meridian sun.

"Oh! as to that, my dear," she said, in the most obliging accents possible, "I have no

intention of doing anything in the world but what you wish."

On hearing this, Judith thought it was time to be gracious, and rising from her chair, she took Miss Elfreda by the hand, and kissed her.

Miss Elfreda, of course, returned the caress very cordially, and then it was speedily settled between them that an invitation to dinner on the following day should be immediately written by Miss Elfreda, and inclosed in a note from Judith.

"Thomas shall take it," said the happy girl; "but there is another note he must take also. I must see Frederic Dorking this morning; you know, aunt, I am to dine with his mother, and go with them afterwards to the Opera. But Grisi will be no Grisi for me, if I have the burden of a secret on my heart. *I must* see Frederic this morning."

"Certainly, my dear! certainly. Nothing can be more natural than that you should wish to do so,—such a very charming young man as he is! But I wish the interview was well over, Judith, too! What will he say about his mother, I wonder?" said Miss Elfreda, with something very like a shudder.

"If Frederic be the man I take him for," replied Judith, "he will manage it all for us. Fear nothing, aunt Elfreda. We are told, you know, that perfect love casteth out fear; and my love for Frederic Dorking is much too near perfection to admit any fear upon this subject."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE note addressed by Judith to her lover fortunately met him at the door of his father's house, and immediately caused him to turn his steps to Green Street, instead of calling upon a friend in the Albany, as he had purposed to do.

"Oh, William of Deloraine ! good at need!"

exclaimed Judith, joyfully clapping her pretty hands as she saw him enter the drawing-room, where her very considerate, and a good deal frightened, aunt had taken care she should be alone.

"A delicious welcome!" cried the young

man, approaching her ; and then, after waiting till the servant had closed the door, dropping gracefully enough upon one knee, and kissing those fair hands, "But wherefore, my fairest, do you bestow it on me at this particular moment ?" he added, placing himself on the sofa beside her.

"Because I most particularly want your faithful services," said Judith.

"How delighted I am to hear it !" he replied. "Tell me, my Judith ! what can I do to serve and please you ?"

"Oh, very much ! More, much more, than any one else in the world could do for me ! Tell me, dear Frederic, do you remember all or anything that you have ever heard me say about my aunt Worthington ?"

"To be sure I do, my dearest Judith !" he replied ; "how is it possible I should forget it ? You had lost her address, sweetest, and I was miserable because I knew of no possible means by which I could find it for you."

"Now, then, wish me joy, dear friend !" said Judith, "for I have not only found her address, but I have found her too."

"Is it possible? How delighted I am! Is she in England, then?" said Frederic.

"Not only in England, but in London, Frederic!" said she. "But it was not only to tell you this that I sent for you, though I well knew that your kind heart would feel pleasure at what had so greatly delighted mine. No, it was not this! I could have kept my news, welcome as it is, till dinner time. But I am beset with difficulties, my dear Frederic, and I know nobody but yourself who can help me out of them."

"This is a trap, Judith," said the young man, laughing. "You want to make me confess that I am delighted to hear of your difficulties, because I may have the exceeding pleasure of getting you out of them. But say on, my beautiful Judith! I will enjoy the pleasure, and make no boast of it."

"But it may be, that my difficulties may make difficulties for you also, and this is the most disagreeable part of the business. But it cannot be helped, and so now I will tell you everything."

And she really did tell him everything, fairly, plainly, clearly, and honestly; nor had

she the least reason to repent her own sincerity, or to change the opinion she had formed of her lover's character.

"I never heard a more interesting story in my life," he exclaimed. "From the first page to the last, it is a most beautiful romance ! But, Judith, how oddly the Jenkyns' family seem to have been divided into two pairs. Your charming mother and this delightful aunt Worthington might have been twins, and so, *entre nous*, might the spinster appendages of the race ; for though their ways of boring one are different, the result, as far as liking goes, is very much the same."

Judith laughed, for she could not help it, but she replied, with all the gravity she could command, "No quizzing of my near relations, if you please, Mr. Frederic ! We are a very respectable race, and respected we must be accordingly. But, dearest Frederic, though you have heard the history of my charming aunt Worthington, and though I feel the most delightful certainty that you will find her charming, and her queer, but very clever son also, you have not yet got me out of my difficulties."

"Assuredly I have not, my Judith, for as yet I have heard of none."

"True, O Frederic ! And now, then, listen, This history of the picture-gallery has a sequel, which, if you have only a little bit of worldly wisdom, my most dear *fiancé*, you may surely guess. My aunt Worthington and her son Charles are arrived in England in a state of the most perfect destitution ! The collection of pictures has been seized for debt ; but a comparatively small sum would, as my aunt tells me, suffice to release them. The diamonds that I have brought home to her, as a legacy from my mother, will, I imagine, much more than cover that ; and if we can manage to get this transaction settled, there will be the value of the pictures left for the support of my aunt and her son. What this may amount to, it is quite impossible for us even to guess ; but even this question, important as it is, is of less immediate consequence than their present means of existence."

"How happy am I, my beloved Judith," cried Frederic, interrupting her, "that my banker's book is in a condition to spare you every atom of anxiety on that account. Of course I have

not my cheque book in my pocket ; but you have only to name the amount that you wish me to draw, and it shall be sent to you within half-an-hour."

The eyes of Judith were fixed upon him as he said this, but before he had finished they were dim with tears. "My dear, dear Frederic," she exclaimed, with deep emotion, "how rightly did I judge you ! But, alas ! dear friend, you will find that all that *your own* dear warm generous heart can do to get me out of my troubles will not suffice. It is your *influence*, Frederic, that I want, and not your money. I have plenty of that, you know. No, no, no, it is not money, Frederic, it is influence. It is the power, if you possess it, of inoculating others with *your own* generous feelings. It is almost unseemly, and quite unnatural, I think, for a youth and maiden, like you and I, to sit in discussion upon hundreds per annum for bed, board, and other necessaries ; and yet it is to this that my difficulties have reduced me. I really do hate to talk about it, but I must. So listen to me again, Frederic,—do, dearest!"

"What would I not listen to, so con-

jured?" cried the enamoured young man, fervently.

"Nay, that won't do, either," said the hard-to-please Judith. "You must not listen to me, and look at me, and answer me in that manner. It won't do at all. You must try to be more like a lawyer, or something of that kind."

"Well, then, most bewitching! Go on. I am all over law."

Judith shook her head reprovingly, but, nevertheless, she went steadily on through all she had to say, and made him understand that what she wanted of him, in the first place, was to make her aunt Elfreda comprehend that he knew every thing about the Worthingtons, their poverty, and the artistic profession of Charles included; and that it was his opinion that Judith ought, from the income allowed her by the Chancellor, to take care, while their affairs remained in their present perplexed condition, to supply them with the means of living comfortably. And that the putting down her carriage, and even parting with her footman and maid, would not be more than so near a relationship required of her, if it were found to

be necessary. "And in the second place," continued Judith, "I want you to state as much of the case as may be absolutely necessary, in your most graceful manner, to your mother; and make her understand that, if she would patronise Charles Worthington, she would probably have the *éclat* of introducing to the English public the most talented artist of the age."

Frederic laughed at her flourish, and declared she was an admirable pupil of aunt Elfreda, who did all her puffing exactly in that style.

"But seriously, Judith," he added, "tell me something positive about this young cousin. Does he take portraits?"

"I have not the least doubt of it," she replied; "for really, without either jesting or puffing, I have never seen any thing so clever as his drawings."

"Drawings! His portraits would not be in oils, then?" said he.

"I cannot answer that question," replied Judith, "but I should rather think not."

"That is charming," returned Frederic. "Clever drawings are admired, I am told, by every body, and if they are in the portrait

line, so much the better ; for at least nine people out of every ten have their portraits taken,—so we shall find patrons by thousands. But I know my mother hates oil pictures. She says they smell so horribly. But drawings ! Oh ! I'll undertake to patronise drawings to any extent. Is there any thing else, my lovely angel, in which I can serve, or please you ?”

“ Dearest Frederic, no !” replied Judith, giving him her hand affectionately. “ You cannot think how very delightful it is, Frederic, after having formed a superlatively high opinion of some one, to find upon trial that they are something more admirable still than even your fancy had painted ! You have made me very, *very* happy !”

But, despite her happiness, the eyes of Judith were swimming in tears.

Frederic Dorking, however, did not appear to misunderstand them, for, as once again he kissed her hand, and bade her “ adieu, till dinner,” he looked himself the very perfection of happiness.

Judith had been fully aware, before the interview began, that it must be a very important one.

Had her lover displayed any thing that she could have felt to be *littleness of heart*, she was conscious that the effect must in every way have been fatal to her happiness. Had he appeared alarmed either at the idea that she might injure her own fortune by assisting her poor relations, or had he testified any thing like regret or mortification at learning that a young man with whom he was about to unite himself so nearly was an artist looking forward to his own exertions for support,—had either of these two possibilities occurred, Judith felt both that her love would have been shaken, or, at any rate, all sweetness taken from it, and that the prospects before her had lost all their brightness.

But how delightfully different were all her feelings now! One of the most marked traits in the character of Frederic Dorking was the absolute incapacity for feigning, which evidently belonged to it; and it was her intimate knowledge of this which rendered the scene which had just passed between them so vitally important in her eyes. She was quite aware that he very passionately loved her, and that it would have been difficult, perhaps, for any

family anecdotes which she could have communicated, to have suddenly so chilled his love as to have led to any change of purpose towards her. But Judith had found time to tell herself, before this important interview took place, that, flattering as this might be, it would not satisfy her. Had he displayed athwart this tender constancy either of the feelings above alluded to, she felt, and she trembled as she felt it, that in that case it was *her* constancy that would fail.

But now, instead of this, she was conscious that she loved him better, oh! far more devotedly, than she had ever done before.

Never, perhaps, had Judith looked so radiantly beautiful as she did that night at the Opera.

She was still at the age when every day seems to increase beauty. We talk of the unmarked progress of time; but if his progress be unmarked, it is because we look not keenly at what is going on, and not because he relaxes in his very effective work.

When the process of improvement ends, that of deterioration as surely begins, as does the fading of light in the western sky when

the sun is taking his nightly leave of us. There may, indeed, be moments when, if his exit be performed with all the gorgeous state with which he sometimes clothes his departure, that the brightness may seemingly become greater instead of less, yet, nevertheless, the light is diminishing. And so it is with woman's loveliness.

There would be something very sad in this, were it not that the same keenness of observation that shows this, shows also it is only over the mortal portion of us that the venerable tyrant can display his destructive power, and a very comfortable little proof it is, too, that the *end all* is not here.

All this, however, is digression. The plain fact is, that Judith Maitland had really and truly never looked so very radiantly lovely as she did that night at the Opera, nor had her mother-in-law elect ever felt so thoroughly proud of her; nor had Frederic himself, perhaps, ever before been so deeply and completely convinced that his affianced wife was the most enchanting being upon earth than during those bright hours.

As to Judith's feelings, they, too, seemed

to partake the *issimo* tone, as Horace Walpole would have called it, which pervaded the sensations of those around her, for her heart assured her that Frederic was the most generous, the most amiable of men; her eyes acknowledged that nothing could exceed the brilliance of the scene before them, and her ears, that nothing could transcend the perfection of the music. In a word, she felt perfectly happy.

And yet, with all this perfection of contentment, she was still conscious that she had a great deal to do—a great deal of positive business to get through, during the next few days; but she did not feel that this was any reason why she should be deprived of the happiness of seeing Frederic in the interval. Besides, she positively longed to introduce her handsome, clever-looking cousin to him; and therefore she ventured to whisper, as they stood together in the squeeze-room, “I shall not be able to see you to-morrow morning for a single moment, for I must go early to my aunt Worthington’s, and probably be with her almost all day; but they are coming to dine with us, and if you can steal time from

mamma to come to Green Street for half an hour, I could introduce you to them."

Is there any form by which a promise can be made more satisfactory than that adopted by Frederic Dorking when he gave his assent to this proposition ? I think not ; and yet it consisted only of a look.

CHAPTER IX.

THERE was no longer any mystery now as to where Judith was going, when the carriage drove to the door after breakfast; and Miss Elfreda having been assured that Frederic Dorking had declared it to be his intention to patronise Charles as an artist till he made him completely the fashion, felt her heart warm towards her young nephew in the most remarkable manner; nay, upon the strength of this, she scrupled not to send her love to her sister, together with the expression of her hope (rather a bold one considering all that had passed) that they should meet at dinner as good friends as ever.

For Judith's sake, in truth, Mrs. Worthington was perfectly ready to forgive and forget every thing, the remembrance of which might have the effect of keeping them asunder; and as for Charles, though perfectly ready to do battle with any one who had offended his mother, he knew so absolutely nothing of all the antecedent circumstances, as to be perfectly ready to take this early invitation as a proof that he was going to visit an affectionate relative.

When Judith entered the comfortless little sitting-room, wherein all the affections of her heart seemed centered—for now the idea of Frederic was delightfully mixed with all it contained—she seated herself, as before, very closely beside her aunt upon the sofa, and having given a passing shake of the hand to Charles when he opened the door to her knock, began to utter something about Frederic Dorking to her in a whisper.

"Do not mutter in that way, you cruel cousin," he exclaimed. "It will be a great deal better to send me away again, as you did yesterday."

Judith felt that the reproof was merited.

She blushed a very celestial rosy blush, and then, after the meditation of half a moment, she said, "No! cousin Charles, I will not send you away, indeed you ought not to be sent away, for I am going to talk particularly about you—only— Pray, aunt Penelope, did you tell him any thing about what I said to you yesterday?"

"She told me that you were going to be married, cousin Judith. Is that what you mean?" said the young man, with a slight augmentation of colour.

"Yes. That is what I meant; because if you did not know that, you could not understand what I was going to tell my aunt now."

"I told him of it, my dear, because you did not enjoin secrecy, and because the information was interesting," said Mrs. Worthington.

"It is all right, aunt! I wanted him to know it; and to-night, after dinner I mean, I shall hope to have the pleasure of introducing Frederic Dorking to you both. He is already deeply interested in the success of Charles as an artist. And his mother, I believe, has great influence."

"Is Mr. Frederic Dorking fond of art?" demanded Charles, with a look and tone of eager interest.

"I don't know," replied Judith, blushing, yet without the least knowing why.

Charles, however, seemed to think that he did, and he looked the other way, as kind-tempered people always do when they see, or fancy they see, symptoms of confusion on a fellow-creature's face.

In fact, he very decidedly thought that Judith had cause to blush, if she did not know whether the man she had promised to marry loved drawing or not.

However, there was a great deal too much to be done and settled among them to permit any leisure for such idle speculations, and in a very few minutes Mrs. Worthington, finding the wishes and the wilfulness of Judith united to be a power which she had no strength to resist, resigned herself to her commands without farther struggle, and the trio mounted Judith's carriage without much farther loss of time, and were speedily conveyed to Mortimer Street, where the inquiring eyes of Judith had descried the announcement of apart-

ments, containing a ‘well-lighted painting-room.’

Had the accommodation they found there been expressly provided for them, it could not have been more exactly all they could want or wish for.

All the arrangements necessary to their entering upon it were brought to a conclusion with wonderful celerity, by means of a little of Judith’s “wilfulness;” for Charles having gently taken his mother by the shoulders, and placed her in an arm chair on a very convenient estrade, for the purpose of ascertaining the effect of a sky-light, very artistically arranged for the use of a painter, Judith gave an expressive touch and look to the respectable-looking female who attended them, and who appeared to be the mistress of the premises, and taking her into an outward room, brought the whole transaction to a conclusion with very little loss of time, yet not without a touch of common sense either ; for though Judith certainly made no difficulties about the rent asked, which, all things considered, was not unreasonable, she would not agree to take the rooms for more than a month certain.

The whole thing, however, occupied wonderfully little time, and Judith and the landlady re-entered the painting-room together, just in time to see Charles hand his mother from the elevated station on which he had placed her, paying her a compliment upon the graceful attitude in which she had sat to him.

"I have told Mrs. Morris," said Judith, who had learnt her name by the simple process of asking for it, "I have told Mrs. Morris that you will not come in till after breakfast to-morrow, which will give her ample time, she says, to get all the rooms in nice order for you. We have only agreed for a month, certain, aunt," she added, with much business-like composure, "but I have told her that if you and my cousin find every thing comfortable, it is probable that you will stay much longer."

Mrs. Worthington had too much tact to demonstrate any thing like surprise; and as to Charles, whose brain was in a perfect fever of delight at the idea of making a portrait of his mother seated on an estrade beneath a skylight, felt no doubt whatever that the delightful arrangement had been made be-

tween his mother and Judith, without his having observed it.

This important business concluded, Judith declared herself under the necessity of returning home, to keep an engagement, as soon as she had set them down in Newman Street; and during the short drive thither, Mrs. Worthington was made so thoroughly to understand the misery which it would be to her niece, if she raised any difficulties in submitting to her arrangements for their accommodation, that she positively, from mere love for her, abstained from it, comforting herself with the persuasion, by no means a wild or unreasonable one, that when the collection of pictures was set free, such a settlement of accounts might take place between them as would prevent the mere money part of the obligations she was bestowing on them from remaining unsettled.

As to the debt of affection, the incurring it was the only real pleasure that had visited the head of the poor widow since she had lost her husband; and, in truth, there was much in the loving ways of the wilful Judith, and in the sensitive watchfulness with which she

seemed to weigh and care for every feeling of this hardly-treated relative, that might have healed and soothed any heart, not absolutely callous and insensible to kindness.

Judith had not exaggerated the importance of her affairs, when she said that she had too much to do at home, to permit her accompanying them up stairs when they returned to Newman Street ; for, in the first place, she found her maid waiting for her, with a decent middle-aged female, who had been strongly recommended as a person capable of being an efficient servant for Mrs. Worthington ; this affair, too, was very speedily arranged, and the woman instructed to be in Mortimer Street by ten o'clock on the following morning. When this was settled, Judith found time to sit down to luncheon with her aunt Elfreda, and during this repast she contrived to make her completely understand, that in consequence of her mother's dying injunctions on the subject, she considered that the comfort and welfare of her aunt Worthington ought to be the first object of her life.

Miss Elfreda was a good deal startled by the strength and fervour with which she ex-

pressed herself, but after the pause of a moment, she replied, "It is very pretty and sweet of you, my dear, to show such reverence to your poor dear mamma's memory; but of course you don't mean, Judith, that when you change your condition, that is, I mean, when you become a married woman, you don't intend *then* that your aunt Worthington shall be the first object of your life?"

"I intend to keep my mother's solemn injunction ever in mind," replied Judith, gravely; "though I trust I shall, at the same time, be able to fulfil the other duties which I may have taken upon myself."

"There is nothing to say, I am sure, against such excellent intentions, my dear love," said Miss Elfreda; "but yet, my sweet Judith, I cannot help fearing that it is possible Mr. Frederic may think that he and his own charming and highly distinguished mother ought to be first and foremost in your good graces."

"I have taken care, aunt Elfreda, that there shall be no misunderstanding between us on this subject," replied her niece. "He is

already prepared to treat my aunt Worthington, and my cousin Charles also, exactly in the way that I wish; and I think you will find, if you will converse with him on the subject, that he is very decidedly of opinion that we ought to give up the carriage if we find we cannot assist my aunt Worthington effectually without doing so."

A thunderbolt falling at her feet could scarcely have caused poor Miss Elfreda to start more vehemently than did these last words of Judith.

"Give up the carriage, my dearest angel?" she exclaimed. "You do not, you cannot, think of it! Oh! Judith, Judith!" she continued, with tears in her eyes, "you are very, very young, and you know not, you cannot know, the great, the tremendous, I might say the awful difference which our putting down the carriage would make in the eyes of every acquaintance we have in the world! Do any thing but THAT, my darling, darling girl, and you shall see that I will go hand in hand with you in every effort that you can make for Penelope and her son; for I would do any thing else to please you. But if you do not

wish to break my heart at once, you will not do THAT!"

Judith took a minute or two to reflect before she answered her. She felt very forcibly that if Miss Elfreda could really be brought to go hand in hand with her in all she wished to do for her aunt Worthington, the object upon which she had set her heart would be much more effectually obtained than if she found opposition from her at every step; and she was not many seconds in coming to the very wise determination of obtaining her object *smoothly*, if possible.

"My dear aunt," she said, "I cannot, as far as I am personally concerned, attach the same importance to the carriage as you do; but believe me, aunt Elfreda, while endeavouring to perform the duty enjoined by my dying mother to my poor suffering aunt Penelope, it will be my very earnest wish to do so in the way least inconvenient to you. We all know that, under the present circumstances, the first thing needful to aunt Worthington is money. They have still, I believe, a very considerable property in Rome, but unfortunately this is at present quite unavailable; and if we do not,

among us, find the means of existence for them, they have really no resource but appealing to public charity. Now their doing this, aunt Elfreda, would appear to me as likely to be much more injurious to *us all*, than putting down the carriage and dismissing my two in-door servants. Mrs. Dorking, for instance, and even my dear generous Frederic too, might, I think, be a great deal startled, and a great deal shocked, at learning that my aunt was in a workhouse."

This was rather a long speech, but not a word of it was lost on Miss Elfreda ; and the effect was every thing that Judith could desire. That both the maiden aunts were *interested* in their eager wish to appropriate the personal guardianship of the wealthy ward, is very certain, but the two old ladies wore their avarice with a difference. Miss Barbara had a sort of mixed notion of saving up money, and of purchasing the reverend hand of the most admired of prebends, by what she should receive from "the Lord High Chancellor of England" on behalf of Judith ; whereas the plans of Miss Elfreda were of a nature much

less sublime, though by no means less dear to her heart.

The first object of *her* heart was to establish herself in a London circle of acquaintance, on a footing a little higher than she had any right to claim; which, it may be observed, in passing, pretty precisely describes the object of all those who seek society from any other object than individual personal affection.

Now, in order to obtain this darling object, it was not desirable, as Miss Elfreda Jenkyns perfectly well knew, that she should take it into her head to save money, but only that she should, somehow or other, be able to spend it. It was with this view, and with this only, that she rejoiced with so much endearing and affectionate enthusiasm at the arrival of Judith under her protection; and the *éclat* of keeping a carriage was so much dearer to her than any convenience she might derive from the use of it, that she would willingly have made a compact with Fate, never to have enjoyed again till her dying day the luxury of using a private carriage, provided only that she might, throughout the whole of

her mortal career, enjoy the credit of possessing one.

Whatever pains she might have taken at a more tranquil moment to conceal from her niece the intensity of this feeling, she took none now; and Judith was not slow in perceiving whereabouts the spring was to be found, by which her actions might be regulated.

She took no unfair advantage of this, however, only taking care to make it understood, that if the carriage was not given up, it was to be on condition that they should between them find wherewithal to supply the assistance which at this moment it was so absolutely necessary for Mrs. Worthington to receive. More than one cause, as the poet truly says, the same effect may give; and never was this made more evident than in the seeming sympathy with which henceforward Miss Elfreda and her niece acted in all that concerned the Worthingtons; and yet the North and South are not wider asunder than the motives by which they were actuated.

CHAPTER X.

BUT to return. The meeting between the long-parted sisters was performed with great propriety on both sides; and Judith looked the other way while they embraced, and by that means avoided seeing the sort of involuntary stiffness on both sides with which the operation was performed.

As to the reception of Charles, there was much more of sincerity in it; for he certainly was, not only one of the handsomest, but one of the most prepossessing young fellows that ever was looked upon, and Miss Elfreda, like every one else, felt the effect of it. There was, therefore, positively a genuine feeling of

liking and cordiality in her manner of shaking hands with him; and as this feeling, by some mysterious means or other, is generally made known to the individual who inspires, as well as to the one by whom it is experienced, the acquaintance between the aunt and nephew was immediately established on a much more agreeable footing than Judith had dared to hope for.

The dinner really passed very pleasantly; and then came the meeting between Judith's affianced husband and the relatives she most fondly cherished.

Her heart beat, poor girl, as she heard Frederic's well-known step on the stair, and she felt that the interview was an important one to her future happiness. It was not so much concerning her aunt Worthington, as concerning Charles, that she felt anxious. Her aunt, who was still a very handsome woman, had precisely that sort of personal appearance, concerning the effect of which nobody could feel anxious. She was tall and graceful in person, and so really distinguished by her general appearance, as to render the extreme simplicity of her deep mourning dress rather

picturesque than homely. Her manner, also, could not, to use an American phrase, be "faulted," so that on her account Judith had no anxiety.

But with respect to Charles, the case was different. His features, though quite as handsome, did not express one half of the high-bred amiable amenity which was so strikingly perceptible in the countenance of Frederic. The first glance of his eye had more, perhaps, of a challenge than a salute in it ; and even in his smile, though it displayed the most perfect set of teeth imaginable, there was, at the same first glance, more of sauciness than civility.

All this, however, was only at the first glance, for a more frank, a more kind, a more affectionate heart, never beat in human bosom than that possessed by Charles Worthington. But, during all the pecuniary embarrassments which had immediately preceded and followed his father's death, he had always felt himself, poor boy, on the defensive with his fellow-creatures ; and as love for his mother, and for his art, divided his soul between them, and as he ever stood ready to "buckler them" both against "a million," he had acquired more of

firmness than of suavity in his intercourse with mankind.

Judith did not quite know all this, but she guessed a good deal of it, and therefore it was that she felt so peculiarly anxious that the first impression each of the young men received of the other should be favourable.

And in a great degree it was so. Frederic's first expression, when speaking of young Worthington, was, "An exceedingly fine young man." And Charles's, in answer to Judith's question, of how he liked his future cousin, was, "Oh ! very much indeed ! He is monstrous handsome, and would make an admirable study for a Spanish grandee, or something of that kind—only he wants—"

"Wants what ?" said Judith, for he had stopped short in the midst of his speech.

"Why, I think, for a picture, he wants more depth of colour about the eyes."

Nothing could be more amiable than the manner in which the young patrician questioned the young artist about his love of art, and offered his services in obtaining admission for him to any private collections he might wish to visit.

"Could we not all go together picture-hunting?" said Judith, who had never yet enlisted her adorer in any expedition of the kind, from suspecting, she scarcely knew why, that it would not interest him.

"Oh, charming!" replied Frederic, eagerly. "There is nothing I should like so well! Charles Worthington shall tell me what I ought to admire; for hitherto, I protest to you, I have been too modest to form an opinion on the subject."

Charles looked at him with a bright, keen glance, which seemed sent to discover whether he spake in jest or earnest; and then from the face of Frederic the eyes of Charles turned to that of Judith, but it was with a look not very easy to be interpreted, for it was graver than the occasion seemed to call for.

Judith coloured, and felt half angry with her cousin, which was extremely unreasonable, for he had neither smiled nor frowned, nor, in fact, in any way given the least indication of any feeling that could justify it.

From painting the conversation turned on music.

"Ah! Charles Worthington," exclaimed

Dorking, “you may have left the native land of pictures, as I have heard my fair Judith call Italy,—you may have left the native land of pictures behind you, but you are come to the native land of music, I promise you! You must hear your cousin Judith sing, Mr. Worthington.”

“Does my cousin Judith sing?” demanded Charles, eagerly. “I am very glad to hear it.”

And so saying, he straightway approached the piano-forte, opened it, and put the music-stool in its proper place.

“Now, then, Mr. Dorking!” said he, “pray lead the young lady to her place. She is not apt to be rebellious, is she?”

“Oh, no!” cried Dorking, with enthusiasm. “Her temper is as sweet as her voice. You will oblige your cousin, will you not, *mon amie?*”

“I will oblige you both, if my singing can do it,” returned Judith; and immediately taking the place prepared for her, she ran her fingers over the keys in a slight prelude, and then sang Mozart’s beautiful air, “Batti, batti, bel Mazetto,” with a perfection of grace and finish rarely found in any singing, and very rarely indeed in the singing of an amateur.

Frederic Dorking was profuse and enthusiastic in his praise, but Charles Worthington said not a word.

He was standing at no great distance from her, nevertheless, and she looked up at him, for his silence had something almost uncivil in it. If her look was meant as a reproof, however, it failed of its effect, for he did not see it, his eyes being covered by his hand. But his head was bent down upon his chest, and his whole attitude was rather that of a man rapt and entranced, than either indifferent or disappointed.

"Well, Mr. Worthington! Is the voice too English a voice to please you?" said Frederic, rather reproachfully.

Charles raised his head, dropped his hand, shook his dark curls, and smiled. He still said not a word, however, but giving Judith, who by this time had quitted her place at the piano, one short glance, he placed himself on the seat she had left, and sang the spirited drinking song from the same opera, with an *estro* that effectually contradicted the idea of his having been in some sort overcome by the unexpected *quality* of the

voice to which he had been listening, if indeed any such idea had been suggested by his demeanour.

"You did not tell me, aunt Penelope, that my cousin was a musician," said Judith. "His voice is magnificent, and his accompaniment quite first rate."

"Almost all artists are more or less musicians, I believe," replied Mrs. Worthington. "His father's voice was quite as fine; but Charles has certainly profited by his Italian education."

"Dear me! It is quite fine singing, isn't it, Mr. Dorking?" said Miss Elfreda.

"Yes, indeed!" replied Frederic, very cordially; "it seems quite so to me, I assure you. How charmed Mrs. Chilbert would be, would she not, Judith?"

"Yes," said Judith, "she would be pleased both with the voice and the manner."

"I wonder that I never heard of you at Rome. Were you a great deal in society, my dear fellow?" said Frederic.

"I? Oh! no. Society, as you call it, was not at all in our line, was it mamma?" said Charles.

Mrs. Worthington shook her head, but only quietly answered "No."

"Judith! Is that all we are to have?" said Charles, rising from the instrument. "I want a morsel of Rossini."

"And I want a Neapolitan ballad," said Judith. "Sit down again, Mr. Charles, if you please."

Charles immediately obeyed her, and with considerable humour, and with all the charm of a most magnificent voice, sang several of those delicious popular airs which enchant almost equally from their melody and their quaintness.

Mrs. Worthington looked amused and pleased. Her sister Elfreda looked puzzled. She discovered by the face of Judith that there was something comical in what had been sung, yet she perceived also, from an occasional word and an occasional look, that she admired his singing still more than she laughed at it, but it seemed exceedingly odd to Miss Elfreda that she should do both. She then looked rather anxiously at Mr. Dorking to see in which way he took it, and to her inexpressible discomfiture she saw him yawn!

It would be no easy matter to do justice to the variety of emotions which seized upon her as she beheld this painful phenomenon. She knew it to be a symptom, and, to the best of her knowledge and belief, an infallible one, that he was bored. Now that any young gentleman of fashion should be bored at a select little party at her house,—or in “her rooms,” as she more correctly expressed herself, was of itself a circumstance calculated to wound her to the quick. But that the gentleman of fashion should be Frederic Dorking, was too painful to endure without wincing; and accordingly she did wince, which wincing was demonstrated by her pulling Judith by the sleeve, and winking vehemently with one eye, while the other was expressively directed towards Mr. Dorking.

But long ere Judith had begun in the remotest degree to comprehend the meaning of the grimace, another vehement feeling supervened. “What will happen next,” thought the observant, but unfortunate maiden aunt; “what will happen next, if Judith thinks I mean to be rude to Charles Worthington? She will be

back at Westhampton, carriage and all, before I know where I am."

And then, instead of winking, she smiled, and nodded her head and smiled again, and went on thus for several minutes, looking at every individual of the company by turns, and fervently hoping that they would each and every of them interpret her smiles and her nods in the manner most agreeable to themselves.

And did Judith, too, see the yawn? Yes, she did, but the effect of it was not to lower Frederic in her estimation, but herself.

Long, long ago, in the very earliest days of their acquaintance, both she and her friend Mrs. Chilbert had made the discovery (at which it was by no means difficult to arrive, for Frederic Dorking had not a grain of affection in him,) that he had no love of music in him. And they had talked the matter over very philosophically, bringing themselves finally to the conclusion, that no folly could be greater than that which led people to expect, or to wish, that all the world should be made exactly upon one model. And having laid this conclusion to their hearts, they never,—at least as far as Judith was concerned, they decidedly

never loved Frederic Dorking the *less*, for not being, as she laughingly said, like Mr. Saunders, the singing minor canon, *more*.

They only took care, both of them, not to mix his visits and those of the vocal churchman together ; and this rule being strictly attended to, no ill effects of any kind arose from this variety (Judith would not permit it to be called a deficiency) in Frederic's organization.

It was natural enough, therefore, that she should blame herself now ; and she did so severely, reproaching herself particularly for her own inferiority, in courtesy and kindness, to her lover, who had so amiably alluded to her singing for the purpose of displaying her little talent to her relations, without thinking of himself, and his own likes and dislikes, for a moment.

All she could do now, however, she did. She closed the instrument, and establishing herself at a table in another part of the room, invited her aunt Worthington to come and examine a new 'Book of Beauty,' of which she had just made a present to the round-table of her aunt Elfreda.

And as she sat herself down to do the

honours of it, drawing a chair close to her own for “aunt Penelope,” she scrupled not to indicate to Frederic, by a glance of her eye, that she would permit him to occupy a chair on the other side of her.

This certainly was the best atonement she could have devised for having bored him with music; for, in the first place, the *juxta-position* she had chosen for him was one for which he always appeared to feel a particular partiality; and in the second, a new book of aristocratic beauty was always sure of being interesting to an aristocratic young man. Not that it must be presumed that Miss Elfreda’s round table had the honour of being the first to present this charming volume to the eyes of Frederic; on the contrary, he had himself taken care to place it on that of his mother a very few hours after it had seen the light, observing to her, as he laid it before her, that he should take care to have Judith in the next, but he had the honour and happiness of knowing all the fair originals, whose portraits or *soi-disant* portraits, figured there; and when this is the case, the gorgeous volume cannot fail of being interesting.

Miss Elfreda, meantime, had placed herself in readiness to do the honours of her elegantly late tea-table, and Charles was consequently, in some sort, thrown out, and left to his own devices. He, therefore, very naturally took the liberty of placing himself behind his cousin Judith, in such a manner as to enable him to see to perfect advantage,—and, in fact, better than any one of the party except Judith herself, the succession of lovely faces which were displayed for the amusement and edification of his mother ; Mr. Dorking, meanwhile, running on with a very animated and amusing current commentary on each.

But Charles Worthington was one of those restless spirits who never seem at ease when they are idle, and having looked at one or two of the portraits, he begged Mr. Dorking to turn to the first page and begin again.

Nothing loath, the young man obeyed the request, and began again, never weary of expatiating on the likeness, or the want of likeness, which each page gave room for.

Charles Worthington, meanwhile, true to his nature, both in propensity to occupation and to art, drew forth from his pocket a small

square drawing-book, properly provided with pencils, and set about copying, after his fashion, and with his characteristic rapidity, the fair heads that were thus slowly passed in review before him.

It may probably have struck other people, before it struck Charles Worthington, that notwithstanding the delicate engraving, and notwithstanding the rare beauty of most of the noble and gentle heads which enrich the ‘Book of Beauty,’ it may have struck many that there may be found therein some few peculiarities of style, and of drawing ; and these were likely enough to attract the peculiarly critical attention of a professional artist, born and bred at Rome.

Be this as it may, however, it is certain that some such peculiarities struck him ; and with a vigour and rapidity of touch, that nothing perhaps but the union of decided natural talent with a thoroughly artistic education can give, the mischievous boy contrived to seize the features and air, one after another, of the pretty, smiling, languishing, sentimental beauties, and turn each portrait so completely “the *seamy side out*,” that without leaving the

possibility of mistaking the resemblance between the beautiful hot-pressed and his abominable copy of it, he produced something at which it was difficult not to laugh.

Having treated three or four of the loveliest celebrities in this unwarrantable manner, he gently laid his little book, open at the first of them, before his cousin Judith.

Of course she took the liberty of laughing, and laughed heartily for a moment ; but then she turned round and scolded him.

“There is nothing, you know, that may not be caricatured, Charles,” said she ; “and if the very handsomest of English women are not beautiful enough to satisfy your fastidious Italian taste, I think we must send you back again as fast as possible.”

“It is not the English women that I have caricatured ; it is only the style in which their (really) exquisite loveliness is here portrayed,” he gravely replied.

“These portraits, I assure you, are after some of our very first painters,” said Frederic Dorking.

“That is very likely,” replied Charles ; “*that* story is extant, and written in very choice

Italian, I promise you. But that will not make me like the style at all better. Judith, you know there was once a man called Raffael, who never did think it necessary to put his women into any postures, actions, forms, or attitudes which were positively unnatural. But then, to be sure, it must be confessed that his pictures were painted before that great law was promulgated, by which it is evident these artists here," pointing to the 'Book of Beauty,' "have regulated themselves, perhaps, upon compulsion."

"What are you talking about, foolish boy? What law do you mean?" inquired Judith.

"It was indited by no vulgar pen, and I know it must be familiar to you. Indeed, I think it ought to be the motto of all modern picture-galleries. It runs thus, Judith,—

"NATURE MUST GIVE WAY TO ART."

Judith laughed again, for she could not help it; but again she was angry with him, too. She was exceedingly anxious that he should appear to the greatest possible advantage before Frederic Dorking, and she feared that he might fancy something carping and over-

critical in the opinions he had given. Frederic, however, did not appear to think so, for nothing could be more cordially kind and good-natured than the manner in which he shook hands with him at parting, telling him that he hoped they should meet often, and that if there was any thing in which his services could be useful, they should be perfectly at his service.

"He is very handsome," said Charles, after Dorking had left the room. "Has he ever had his picture taken, Judith?"

"Not since he was quite a child, I think," she replied.

"I should like to take it—I should like to have some portraits to do, cousin Judith," said the young man, with a more anxious look than she had yet seen him wear.

"Now that you, you dear pretty creature, and aunt Elfreda too, have received us so kindly, my pride is satisfied; and I am quite ready, if my dear mother will let me have my way, to put aside the gentleman for ever, and come forth the artist, and nothing but the artist. But in this, I believe, as in every thing else, *c'est le premier pas qui coûte*. I

have already done one or two portraits that were pronounced passable at Rome, and your turning to look for my name in the catalogue cheers me. There must have been something in that drawing."

"I think there was a great deal in it, Charles; and when the exhibition is over, I mean to buy it," said Judith.

"I would rather give it to you," said poor Charles, "if you will let me."

"I dare say you would, cousin—I can understand that perfectly," she replied; "but that is not the way to do business. When you have made ten thousand pounds clear, either by your own works or by the sale of the pictures you have got at Rome, I will give you permission to make me a present of the very prettiest drawing you can produce."

"So be it!" he replied; "and I should like to go to work upon it to-morrow morning. But tell me, how am I to get my first portrait?"

"Will you take mine, cousin Charles?" said Judith.

He coloured, looked at her earnestly for a

moment, and then said, “ I would rather take a portrait of aunt Elfreda first.”

“ What say you to that, dear aunt ! ” said Judith, by no means displeased at the proposal, which she thought very likely to be graciously listened to by her aunt.

Nor was she mistaken. Miss Elfreda blushed and smiled, and though hoping in her heart that it would not be *very* dear, she determined instantly not to let any such consideration stop her ; and, therefore, in the most gracious possible manner, proclaimed her perfect readiness to sit to him, whenever he would give her notice that he was coming for that purpose :

“ It is not I, it is you that must come, good aunt,” replied the young man, eagerly. “ You are not aware, perhaps, that I have got one of the best lights and most commodious painting-rooms in London.”

“ Have you really, my dear ? ” exclaimed the well-pleased lady, who began to think that matters were not quite in so deplorable a state as she had fancied. “ Yes, to be sure, Charles. You are quite right, my dear ; I remember now all about it. Yes, I must come

to you, of course ; every body goes to the painter's rooms. I recollect all about it now. I went once with Mrs. Carey. But you must let me have a friend with me, Charles. You won't object to my bringing Judith, will you ?”

“ Yes ; I shall, aunt ; I shall object to it very much. It appears to me that she is a great talker,—and, in short, I think she is exactly the sort of person to disturb one. No, please, aunt ; bring any one else you choose, but don't bring my cousin Judith.”

She promised to do exactly as he wished, and then they parted.

The two sisters were, upon the whole, greatly pleased with their interview, but by no means sorry that it was over ; and the two cousins were mutually ready to confess that they did not very well know what to make of each other.

But Charles went to bed, and dreamed that he had very nearly equalled Raffael in a portrait which he had made of Judith as Saint Cecilia ; while Judith dreamed that she was weeping bitterly, because her cousin Charles

had made a caricature of Frederic when in the act of listening to a song, and confessing that he knew not whether the tune was that of a psalm or a jig.

CHAPTER XI.

MRS. DORKING had by this time taken such firm possession of Judith in the way of chaperonship, that neither for morning or evening engagements was much opportunity left her to choose where she would go.

To this, of course, Miss Elfreda was fain to submit, whether she liked it or liked it not, as the rights of her elegant rival were not of a nature for her to contest or quarrel with. In fact, the evil, if it were one, brought a very ample atonement with it; for well as Miss Elfreda might have liked to lead her beautiful niece with her wherever she went, she liked quite as well, or even better still, perhaps, to mention in all directions the interesting fact, that the dear girl was engaged, as usual, with

her elegant mother-in-law elect. This sufficed to console Miss Elfreda. And Judith herself, who would often have willingly exchanged the dignified protection of her dear Frederic's fashionable mother for the gentle and humble protection of her own dear aunt Worthington, found her consolation for this often wearisome restraint in the fortunate circumstance, that Mrs. Dorking's morning did not begin till that of her aunt Worthington was ended.

She had another great source of comfort, too, in the daily-increasing interest which it was evident Miss Elfreda soon began to feel for her nephew Charles. How much of this might be attributable to the extreme delight she experienced in sitting to him for her picture, and how much to the great admiration expressed for him and his talents in the family of Professor Carey, whose Westhampton reminiscences went back to the youthful days of his beautiful mother,—to which of these two causes her growing partiality for him might be most justly attributed, it would be difficult to say; that both had a good deal to do with it is quite certain, and the result was almost as many invitations for both himself and his mother to “a family dinner in Green Street,” as even Judith herself could have desired.

That this was a comfort to her, in every way, may very easily be imagined; for not only did it give her the dearly-valued pleasure of their society, but it procured it for her in a way that was not only free from all difficulty, but all objection of any kind.

The only circumstance of her position at this time which appeared to Judith otherwise than she could reasonably wish it to be, was the rather too distinct division of herself and her existence between her friends in Mortimer Street and those in Berkeley Square.

In as far, indeed, as Mrs. Dorking herself and her stiff and stupid husband were concerned, Judith had no wish that it should be otherwise; for so keenly observing and so very reasonable a person as herself could not easily be brought to wish that elements so decidedly heterogeneous should attempt to mingle.

But the case was, of course, widely different with respect to Frederic. For not only was she persuaded that, however hostile the frivolous pursuits of his past existence might have been to the full developement of his talents yet still, she was persuaded, also, that there was that within him which would and must kindle into great intellectual superiority,

if brought into contact with such a man as Charles Worthington.

In age, her affianced husband and her cousin were nearly equal; but it was far otherwise, certainly, in all that related either to general information or special study.

And yet Judith often blamed herself for dwelling so much on her consciousness of this fact.

Was it not being unreasonably *exigeante*? For how was it possible for a man so eternally engaged in society as Frederic, to have found time to read and to study as Charles Worthington had read and studied?

It was *not* possible; and she ought to consider herself as one of the very happiest girls in the world for having engaged the affections of so amiable and so admirable a person, and one for whom it was so very evident that multitudes of young ladies, superior to her in every way, would be only too happy to contend, if there was any chance of their succeeding.

And then she remembered the high place which Frederic Dorking had held in the estimation of her accomplished and highly gifted friend Mrs. Chilbert, and how the dean liked and admired him.

Upon one occasion she was reproaching herself for the more than usually long time which she had suffered to elapse without answering Mrs. Chilbert's last letter. "I wonder what has been the real cause of this?" thought she. "I do believe it is because I am afraid of saying too much about Charles Worthington. She would not think so, if she knew him."

And then she fell into a very profound reverie upon the sort of effect that Charles Worthington was likely to produce upon her friend—his voice—his taste—his extraordinary imagination—his deep feeling—his fearless spirit—and his gentle heart!

She went on thinking of all this, and all in reference to Mrs. Chilbert, till she was startled by the entrance of her maid, who brought a note from her gay, happy, brilliant *fiancé*, as gay and as brilliant as himself.

It was to tell her that, though barbarously kept at home to assist at a consultation with a pet upholsterer, who always made himself waited for, about the decorations of the dancing-rooms at the ball they were to open together that day month in Berkeley Square, he had it in commission from his mother to ask her if she felt disposed to make up a pic-

nic breakfast-party (seeing the weather was so divinely beautiful) for the morrow? It was proposed that the spot visited should be Richmond, the mode of conveyance a steam-boat, fitted up as a private barge for the occasion, with music and all proper and fitting *et cætera* on board. Subjoined was a postscript, intimating very civilly, in a direct message from Mrs. Dorking herself, that if Miss Elfreda Jenkyns would like to join the party, they should be very glad to see her.

Judith read the note, and remained for a minute or two in meditation over it.

"Mr. Frederic's man is waiting, Miss," said the abigail.

"Is he?" said Judith; and then, after another short pause, she added, "tell him that I will send an answer."

The maid retreated, and Judith was left alone. Shakspeare says there is a tide in the affairs of men; and most assuredly there is a tide also in his thoughts, which, taken at the flood, will often lead to a point which they would have never reached, if the movement had been made at a moment of less impulse.

The mind of Judith was very full of her cousin Charles, and of her aunt Worthington

too, when this note arrived ; and her thoughts, thus occupied, naturally mixed themselves with the thoughts suggested by the note ; and thus united, on they rushed, tide and wind both seeming favourable, till they reached a point from which they had been very distant a few short hours before.

It had repeatedly, but not very impressively, occurred to Judith before, that, considering the position in which she stood with Frederic, and considering also the cordial good humour with which her lover had treated her cousin when first introduced to him, now above a fortnight ago,—it had occurred to her to wonder a little that he, Frederic, should never yet have found time to call upon him, Charles.

But Judith knew herself to be exceedingly ignorant of all the established usages of English society ; and as day after day had worn away without this event, which she was anxiously looking for, she almost succeeded in persuading herself that there must be some fixed regulation in point of time, when people were known to have entered a new abode, and that nobody ought to call upon them till that period was expired.

One obvious way of arriving at the truth on

this point, yet that she omitted, would have been the consulting her aunt Elfreda.

But on the subject of her aunt Worthington and of her cousin Charles, Judith had not courage to ask any thing that might have elicited a disagreeable answer from any one. She felt that she could not have patiently endured the being told that Mrs. Dorking considered Mrs. Worthington as too completely in a rank of life distinct from herself to have permitted her thinking of paying her a visit.

Still less, oh! far less, could she bear the idea that any similar reason had prevented Frederic from calling upon Charles. And it was because she felt that she could not bear any thing of the kind patiently, poor little girl, that she did not permit herself to dwell seriously on the subject at all.

But this mention of the intended ball, this invitation to the pic-nic, (and to Richmond, too, where there were so many things that she would have given the world to look at with her cousin Charles,) all this together, particularly as her aunt Elfreda was included in the invitation, brought the hateful conclusion home to her mind that the Dorkings did not mean to notice the Worthingtons at all.

When first the possibility, and then the

probability, of this came upon her, such a glow of indignation came over the heart of Judith, that she felt as if she could not breathe without difficulty; and from this really terrible sensation she was only relieved by a violent burst of tears.

"And yet Frederic knows, for I have told him, how solemn was the manner in which my tenderest affection for my aunt Worthington was commanded by my dear mother with her dying breath! Does he think that after this I can separate myself from her? Does he think he can have *me* for his wife, and not have *her* for his aunt, and *Charles* for his cousin? Charles! Gracious Heaven! A creature so highly gifted! Is Frederic ashamed of him because he is an artist? Oh! if I thought this possible! But it is not possible! Nothing, no, nothing on earth shall make me believe it but his declaring to me the disgraceful fact himself! But Heaven forgive me! What a wretch I am for even thinking such a thing possible! My dear, generous, devoted Frederic! Oh, never, never shall he know how basely I have wronged him!"

She had exactly reached this point, and her elastic young spirit had just bounded up again,

as it were, from the “slough of despond” to the bright regions of hope and confidence, when a gentle knock was heard at the door.

“Come in!” said Judith, who thought it was her maid bringing some other message; but when the door opened, it was her aunt Elfreda who appeared at it.

“Mr. Frederic’s man has told Robert,” said the anxious-looking lady, “that Mrs. Dorking is going to have a magnificent pic-nic party to-morrow, and that she has sent a note to you to ask you about it. Is all this true, Judith?”

Judith put the note she had received into her hand.

A moment sufficed to read it, but it required more than another moment for the recovery of Miss Elfreda’s composure, before she could trust her voice to make any commentary on the contents.

At length, after a very deep-drawn sigh, she ejaculated, “Well, Judith! I do call that very kind, my dear! very kind indeed!”

This enthusiastic reception of her part of the invitation stifled at once in the mind of Judith, the proud little imp, an intention which had slyly insinuated itself, of refusing all participation in the pic-nic scheme herself.

But though this wish, or perhaps it might be called intention, was frustrated, another intention took its place, which was at once acted upon, all foregone objections to it being forgotten by Judith's saying, "Don't you think it will be very strange, aunt Elfreda, if the Dorkings do not invite Mrs. Worthington and Charles?"

"My dear, dear child! what are you thinking of?" replied Miss Elfreda, very solemnly, or rather dolorously, shaking her head. "You really, sometimes, my dear Judith, seem to know no more of the common laws and rules of society than a little child of five years old! Your aunt Worthington is a most lady-like, really elegant-looking woman; and as to your cousin Charles, I certainly consider him as one of the most promising young men I have ever seen, and I should not wonder, Judith, if you, and even I too, were to live to see him as much the fashion as ——, or, in fact, as any of the first-rate successful artists in London. But fair and soft goes far, my darling Judith. He must wait his time, like all other clever young men have done before him; and as to our attempting to push him up into fashionable society before that time arrives, we might just as well try to make peaches ripen in the

sun in January. He must wait till he has acquired fame, before he can hope to enjoy it."

"Certainly, aunt Elfreda ! I am quite aware of that," replied Judith. "But I am not expecting fame for him ; only common civility?"

"Common civility ? My darling child ! I fear, on the contrary, that it is very uncommon civility that you are looking for and expecting. Use your own good sense, Judith, I do beg of you, before you take any of these disagreeable fancies into your head. Just remember, my dear, who, and what, Charles Worthington really is. It is nothing to the purpose, you know, *our* being very fond of him, and all that sort of thing. He is our blood relation, and that accounts for it. But what I want you to consider is, just what he *is*, and what he must be acknowledged to be, to other people. He is just the son of a drawing-master, Judith, who had the impudence and good luck to run away with a respectable gentleman's daughter. But this did not prevent his being a poor, and I believe a ruined, drawing-master still ; and this is the only style and title that his son inherits from him. Then just ask yourself, Judith, whether you think we have any right to expect that he should at once be installed

in the first circle of society in Europe? I make no mention of my poor sister, because, to do her justice, she does not appear to have a wish or a thought beyond the situation in which her own act and deed has placed her, and therefore, on her account, you have of course no anxiety. And as to our poor dear Charles, Judith, who most certainly is one of the very finest young men that ever was seen, I can only repeat that we must have patience."

Had Miss Elfreda's harangue been one little bit less reasonable, poor Judith would have borne it a great deal better, because she might have had the relief of being avowedly angry; but as it was, she seemed beyond the reach of all comfort, save tears. And so she wept heartily.

Miss Elfreda, perhaps, might have approached somewhat nearer to a state of sympathy, had it not been for the invitation to the pic-nic; but this so entirely overpowered every other feeling, that, after having finished the speech above recited, she fixed her mind immovably upon a new bonnet, and Judith speedily found she could make her think of nothing but the fête.

"I suppose, my dear, that there cannot be

any occasion for me to answer the note separately? You do not think there is, Judith, do you?"

"No, ma'am, no!" sobbed Judith.

"Pray don't cry, my darling love! It is just as if you cried only because I was invited."

"Don't say that, aunt!" said Judith, beginning to feel conscious that she was not behaving well. "Your being invited is I think the only thing that could make me go myself. I am sick of all their folly and finery! I am indeed! But I will write directly, aunt Elfreda, and say that you have much pleasure in accepting the invitation. That is the proper phrase, isn't it?"

"Yes, to be sure, dearest! and don't delay writing any longer. Oh, Judith! think how many hundreds of elegant and beautiful women would give a little finger to be of Mrs. Dorking's pic-nic breakfast at Richmond. You are spoiled, my dear, you are indeed, or you never could be so unnaturally indifferent to it yourself."

"I fear I am spoiled!" replied Judith, with some bitterness, "but not exactly in the way you mean, aunt Elfreda. If I were unspoiled, if I were only just the same girl that I was

when mamma told me to find out my aunt Worthington, and always to love her dearly, if I were quite as unspoiled as I was then, I very much doubt whether any thing,—any engagement, any affection whatever, would make me consent to take part in an amusement from which she, and her son, were of necessity excluded."

"And I very much doubt, Judith, whether, if your dear mamma could hear what you are now saying, she would approve it at all more than I now do. Just ask yourself, my dear child, what it is that you wish and expect."

"I wish and expect nothing, aunt Elfreda, but that the nearest and dearest relations I have in the world should be treated with kindness, or at least with civility, by those to whom I am about to unite myself by ties closer still," said Judith, somewhat sternly.

"I beg your pardon, my dear, but you do ask a great deal more than that," replied her aunt ; "and I rather think you ask more than it would be in the power of those to grant, whom you blame so very harshly for not granting it. I know a good deal, Judith, about the rules and regulations of London society ; and I do most sincerely believe, that if Frederic Dorking, by way of proving his

devotion to you, were either to coax or scold his mother into inviting Charles Worthington to join her party to Richmond, he would find that instead of being considered as one of the society, he would only find himself stared at first, and then neglected as an intruder."

"Not if he were *properly* introduced to them," said Judith, sternly.

"What do you call properly introduced, my dear?" demanded Miss Elfreda. "Would you have him introduced as what he is, or as what he is not?"

"Most surely I would have him introduced as what he is," returned Judith, indignantly. "He might at least be introduced as my near relation."

"But could that be all, Judith? Would that satisfy the curiosity of people?" said the reasonable Miss Elfreda. "And do you think it would be fair, do you think it would be generous, to take advantage of Mr. Frederic Dorking's affection, which indeed I do believe could deny you nothing,—but would it be generous, I say, to tax that affection by forcing upon him the task of telling all these fine people of rank and fashion that the young man is the son of a person who was a drawing-master at Rome? I dare say," she added,

"that he *would* do it, if you insisted upon it as a proof of his love ; but if he did, I think it very likely that his mother would never speak to him again."

Judith turned very pale ; but after the interval of a moment she said, "Perhaps you are right, aunt Elfreda. I would not willingly act ungenerously towards Frederic. Do not let us talk about it any more now. I will write the note immediately."

Miss Elfreda took the hint, and left the room perfectly satisfied at the effect of her eloquence. But her eloquence had perhaps gone rather farther than she had intended. She had proved too much.

CHAPTER XII.

JUDITH kept her promise. She wrote the note immediately, and wrote it, too, quite as her aunt wished her to do ; that is to say, she accepted for them both the invitation to the pic-nic, and having written and sent this important document, she sat down to think.

It has rarely happened, perhaps, that any one in possession of the many good things which constitute happiness, and afflicted by so little that appeared likely to destroy it, ever felt so heartily miserable as Judith Maitland did at that moment.

It was not that she was insensible to the blessings that surrounded her, nor was she of a character to exaggerate any of the ordinary evils of life if they had befallen her ; but she

was now beset by a species of sorrow that she knew not how to brave, nor how to bear.

Could all her philosophy teach her to think lightly of circumstances which seemed to threaten poor Charles, and through him his dear mother also, with the continuance of a position which must inevitably repress his hopes, paralyse his courage, and render of slow, or none effect, all the admirable talents and fine qualities of which she had felt so proud?

It was as clear as light that her own brilliant prospects were destined to prove an injury to him.

Had Frederic Dorking, instead of being what he was, with his revenue of thousands, his coronet, his proud father, his fine mother, and his own undisputed reputation of being one of the most fashionable men about town,—had he, instead of all this, been as humble an individual as herself, how very much happier should she have been! But the telling herself this did no good. It neither altered his position nor her own, nor could it in any way assist in changing that of Charles Worthington.

As this last fact presented itself, and became established in her mind, it occurred to her to ask herself what she should wish to

make of him, did she possess the power of deciding what his situation should be. "Would I make an idle, fine gentleman of him?" thought she.

A crimson glow accompanied the answer that her heart suggested. No! Not for her own right hand would she have robbed his of its cunning! Again and again she meditated both upon the question and the answer; and not all her meditations, no, nor all her suffering either, and her eyes were still overflowing with tears, could lead to any other answer.

"Then what do I weep for?" said she, in a sudden paroxysm of common sense. "This is worse than merely being young and childish, as Mrs. Dorking so often calls me in the midst of her elegant caresses. I must be wayward, wilful, and perverse in no common degree, if I am positively sitting here in lamentation over that which I confess to myself I would not change if I had the power. And what then would I have altered?" continued her soliloquy. "My own situation? Am I then tired of Frederic? Am I faithless to him? No, dearest Frederic, no! I love you dearly, dearly! And if so, how can I wish to rob him of what I know he values highly? Where would be my love, and where would be my

justice, if I could wish to place him in what he would consider as a worse condition, merely to save my cousin from the possible mortification of feeling that they were not upon an equality ?

"This will never do!" she murmured, in conclusion. "I do believe that it is my own paltry vanity that is wounded because my cousin is not included in this party ; and if so, it is not the pomp that must take physic, but the trumpery feeling that leads me to fancy it of importance."

And having reached this point, she began making a variety of excellent resolutions, all tending to the government of her future conduct, upon the principle that her affection for Charles and his mother must show itself in a more rational way than in weeping because they were not what they were not, and what, moreover, they did not wish to be.

And so she said nothing about the pic-nic to Mrs. Worthington or to Charles ; and most assuredly they never said any thing to her either about that, or any other of the engagements which so often prevented them being together, when it was often pretty obvious that both parties would have wished it.

The pic-nic came off with all the splendour

that was likely to attend a *fête* given by so influential a personage as Mrs. Dorking ; and Judith, in pursuance of her wise resolutions, very earnestly endeavoured to persuade herself that she enjoyed it. As long as the pretty voyage lasted, she in some degree succeeded in this, for the weather was bright, the river beautiful, everybody kind, and Frederic devoted.

Before they left their gaudy bark, however, she felt herself very weary, and began to suspect that she was a bad sailor on a river, though a good one on the sea ; for her head ached, and her eyes ached, and altogether she began to fancy that she must be decidedly unwell.

“Perhaps,” thought she, “what I feel may be the first symptoms of such a fever as my little sister died of. I well remember that her dear head ached too. Well ! and if it be so, what then ? Why, then I shall be with my own dear mother again ; and there is nothing very terrible in that.”

It is not very likely that any single individual, of all that gay and gallant company, would have believed in the perfect sincerity of spirit with which this thought was breathed to her own soul by Judith. And, in truth, there

must have been something at work within her deeply hostile to the light-hearted gaiety that seemed to inspire them all ; for the sallies which produced the most radiant smiles, nay, even lively bursts of low-toned, elegant, musical laughter from others, fell on her ear with a sort of leaden dullness that made her long to go to sleep. And then the sun grew brighter and brighter, and her parasol, the gift of Mrs. Dorking, was of white silk, and she did not feel the imperfection of its shade to be at all less painful because it was trimmed with magnificent lace. And then from her parasol, which she was quite ready to declare had made her extremely ill, she turned her eyes upon her exquisite dress, the choice of which she had dutifully left to Frederic's mother, at *his* particular request,—and there was no part of it that she did not contemplate with extreme dislike. And yet it had really nothing objectionable in it, being composed of primrose-coloured silk, covered with a mixture of fine muslin, and finer lace.

“Fancy Charles composing a picture, and putting a young girl into such a dress as this !” thought she. And yet this thought, though it appeared to her exceedingly comical and ridiculous, brought tears into her eyes.

"I certainly must be ill," was the thought that followed, naturally enough, upon her becoming conscious of this unaccountable weakness ; and in order to hide it, she turned herself round, and hung her head over the side of the vessel. This was exactly the worst thing she could have done, for having obtained this advantageous position, she took advantage of it, and thrice had Frederic pronounced her name before she felt herself in a condition to turn round and meet his eye.

Even when she did so, though the tears were gone, she did not look like her bright self, and was at last obliged to confess that her head ached, which she attributed to the unusual heat of the day.

"And you an Indian ?" cried Frederic.

"It is very true," she replied, "but, somehow or other, the Indian sun is different."

"Is it ?" returned he, with a good-humoured smile ; and at the same time seizing upon a huge umbrella, which was lying among the ship's stores, and spreading it as a canopy over them both, though the gaily striped awning ought to have contented them, "I think it must be the reflection from the water : look at it no more, my Judith !"

The gentle kindness of his whispered accent seemed to fall on her heart like a reproach, and she rallied her spirits, and laughed with the next person she saw laugh, though she knew not at what.

And now their little voyage was over, and their anchor cast ; and then the whole party were invited to go on shore, and enter the carriages which were in waiting to take them to the Park. To Judith this “seeing the Park” was the great event of the day, but it was so to her alone, for she was the only one to whom the sight was new ; and this part of the scheme was probably added to the voyage chiefly for the purpose of affording time and opportunity for the attendants to spread the banquet on the deck. But, like many other expeditions of the same kind, its enjoyment was destroyed, at least to her, by the too elaborate preparations made to ensure its being perfect. To enjoy Richmond Park, it is necessary to walk in it, and how was it possible to do this in silk shoes ? How was it possible, in short, to leave their delightful open carriages, which altogether made the most brilliant display that had been witnessed there during the season ; how was it possible to *get out* and walk ?

The proposition, though made with tolerable boldness by Frederic, was received with a universal “Oh dear, no ! I had rather not walk, if you please !” And Judith was obliged to submit, which she did with the more resignation from recollecting, at last, the extreme absurdity of seeing such dresses as her own, and those of the rest of the party, exposed to the perils of a walk !

And so the carriages took the usual round, and then returned again to the water’s edge, where they daintily re-embarked, without spot or blemish ; and this operation being performed, something very like a universal chorus might have been heard, as the spectacle of the splendid and cleverly arranged banquet met the eyes of the company, and “I never was so hungry in my life !” was now uttered with as much energy as the “I had rather not walk !” had been spoken an hour before.

And now Mrs. Dorking was in all her glory. This was by no means the first pic-nic, as she chose to call it, that she had given on the silver bosom of the Thames, for it was a species of fête at which she presided with peculiar pleasure, from having been told, about a dozen years before, that she was like a celebrated

picture of Cleopatra, which represented that dark-browed beauty in her barge.

She never dressed her still handsome person so carefully, and never bestowed so many minute instructions about the preparations for any fête, as she did for her breakfasts upon these occasions. And certainly she was not mistaken in believing that the boat and the banquet, upon the present occasion, were arrayed in such a manner as to produce a very splendid effect when she returned with her party on board.

Bright and brilliant draperies for the awning, and bright and brilliant ornaments for the table, united to produce a blaze of rich colouring that really might have contented any Eastern queen. And of course it is quite superfluous to add, that the table was luxuriantly, as well as richly, spread.

But this display was not all upon which the vanity of Mrs. Dorking meant to feed itself upon this occasion. There happened to be a gentleman of strawberry-leaf rank among her guests, who had a vehement passion for music. It was only lately that she had been fortunate enough to make his acquaintance, and among her never-ending little drawing-room intrigues, the one upon which she was at the present

moment the most earnestly bent, was the converting his Grace into an *habitué* in her saloon. In order to do this, she knew that she must give him good music, and she did give him good music.

Not, indeed, that she knew or cared at all more about the science than did her son Frederic ; but people who are as desperately purposed to be cited as among the first in the brilliant struggle for party-giving fame, must neglect *nothing* which can contribute to success. Very high rank, indeed, saves an immense amount of labour and pains in this business; but without it, nothing ~~sort~~ of ceaseless exertion can succeed.

Mrs. Dorking, therefore, at her pretty, highly-finished house in Berkeley Square, very often took care to have very excellent music. It was this which first attained for her the acquaintance of his Grace, and it was this which had now induced him to make one of the party in her "barge."

"But on this occasion there were no professional artists, and Mrs. Dorking had trusted a good deal to the effect of Judith's splendid voice, which she happened to know that the duke had not yet heard.

The animated and animating breakfast over,

therefore, Mrs. Dorking drew near to Judith, whom she considered as very completely her own property, and as part and parcel of that vast variety of pretty ornamental things upon the possession of which she prided herself, and laying her hand caressingly on her shoulder said, "Now, dearest Miss Maitland ! This is exactly the moment for us to listen to your charming voice. The light breeze that fanned our awning half an hour ago is hushed now. And when you begin, every other sound will be hushed also."

" You must excuse me, Mrs. Dorking," replied Judith, with as much composure, and as much decision too, as if her future splendid destiny was to be as independent of Mrs. Dorking as was that of the bird that was flying over her head.

" Excuse you?" repeated Mrs. Dorking, in an accent much more honestly corresponding with her genuine feelings than was quite usual with her. " No, my dear, if you please, it is you who must excuse me ; for I feel absolutely compelled to confess, that upon this occasion I cannot stand upon ceremony, and that I must have you sing."

Perhaps if Frederic Dorking had been standing before her at that moment, looking at her

with his loving eyes, she might not have found the spirit of rebellion strong enough within her to answer as she did. But he was not only out of her sight, but out of her mind too, at that moment, and she replied not only disobediently, but very stiffly, "I cannot sing to-day, Mrs. Dorking."

What might have been the rejoinder had no curious observers been there to listen, it is impossible to say; but Mrs. Dorking was too thoroughly well-drilled in all exercises to be performed in public, to permit any feeling to ruffle the perfect *tenue* of her demeanour; she therefore acquiesced with a silent bow, and retired.

But the fire that is smoothly and carefully covered up, will retain its heat greatly longer than the fuel that is permitted to blaze up into flame.

The impression made by this on the mind of Judith was slight at the moment. She really did not feel well, and truly was neither in mind, nor body, in a state to sing, without making a painful exertion. This painful exertion, however, might have been made, had there been something a little less imperious in Mrs. Dorking's manner of asking for it. Judith had not an atom of the feeling commonly

called pride about her. She neither considered herself to be a person of fashion, nor had she the least wish to be one ; but as little did she wish, or intend, to put herself under the authority sometimes assumed by those who filled that exalted station : it was this feeling, doubtless, which furnished the courage necessary to say "no," when it would have been disagreeable to her to say "yes." There might also have been some little inclination to open the eyes of Mrs. Dorking to the important fact, that it was not her intention to live without a will of her own ; and in this it is possible she succeeded, even beyond her intention at the moment.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE portrait of Miss Elfreda, which was in oils, and the size of life, went on rapidly, and satisfactorily even to the young artist, though in general he was not very easily pleased with his own performances.

Judith was equally delighted and amazed by the rapidity and the excellence of the work. Mrs. Worthington was evidently greatly pleased with it. But as for Miss Elfreda herself, she was in ecstacies! The painting a real likeness of a rather ugly elderly woman, in such a manner as to please her, is certainly by no means an easy task, and the young artist deserved considerable credit for his ingenuity, as well as for his skill.

He had felt at once, that if he attempted a portrait of Miss Elfreda Jenkyns in her draw-

ing-room costume, he was lost. But he had speedily discovered that his aunt Elfreda was not only a learned lady, but, as she confessed herself, a little romantic ; and on this hint he spoke, and found little or no difficulty in persuading her that she was not a sort of person to have her portrait taken in an ordinary, every-day style, and that as he was conscious of being more likely to succeed in a fanciful imitation of her features than if she sat to him in the fashion of the day, he should like to make a Sibyl of her.

"I do not quite promise," he modestly added, "to make your portrait a rival to Raffael's, but at any rate, you know, I may imitate the head-dress, and the flowing drapery." Miss Elfreda was in raptures at this proposal, and though she might perhaps have been better satisfied with the features had they been portrayed a little less faithfully, she was perfectly ready to agree with her nephew that the head was more picturesque as it was.

The admiration expressed by the Carey family, who were freely admitted to Charles's painting-room, as well as the more critical praise bestowed upon the picture by one or two well-known artists, whom Mr. Carey had

brought there, so worked upon the feelings of Miss Elfreda, that in utter forgetfulness of all she had said to Judith on the propriety of not attempting to establish a visiting acquaintance between Frederic Dorking and her humble relatives, she eagerly asked him, upon his calling at the moment of her return from a sitting, if he would go with them the next morning to see her portrait.

Now it must not be presumed, because nothing has been said upon the subject, that nothing had passed between Mrs. Dorking and her son concerning "the magnificent-looking young man," whom he had asked her to patronise.

On the contrary, a great deal had passed between them on this subject. In the first instance, his request for "the assistance of her powerful patronage for a young artist in whose success he was greatly interested," had been received, as all such requests from him were sure to be, very graciously.

Had there been a little less of self-seeking vanity on the part of the mother, and a little more individuality and steadiness of opinion on the part of the son, the close union between them would have been really admirable. But however well we may like to see a mother

proud, as it is called, of her son, or a son *devoted* to his mother, we do not, I think, any of us like to see a middle-aged lady trading in society upon the credit of having a wealthy and a comely son ; and still less, perhaps, do we like to see a son yield his own intellect to that of his mother to a degree that never leaves him in the possession of that firm confidence in himself, without which no lord of the creation can ever feel and find that he is quite in his right place.

Mrs. Dorking, as usual, listened to Frederic's earnest recommendation of young Worthington to her patronage with attention and interest, and declared herself confident of being able immediately to obtain some sitters for him. But her son Frederic was well aware that it would not do to leave the disclosure of the young artist's affinity to his affianced Judith, to any one but himself ; and he, therefore, with a great deal of delicacy, and, as he thought, with a great deal of skill, proceeded to state this disagreeable fact to his mother.

Had Mrs. Dorking been less practically and completely aware of the complete independence of her son upon the will of his father, and even upon her own, her manner of receiving this astounding intelligence would have

been very unlike what it was. In that case, she would have made very short work of it, and Mr. Frederic would very speedily have been made to understand, that he was to decide between his parents and his *position in society*, and his pretty, promised bride.

But as it was, the affair was wholly different.

Frederic's place in society did not depend on his parents. This was one great reason, and decidedly the greatest, for his mother to bear with him patiently whenever he appeared inclined to be wilful, which, to say the truth, was not often. But the fortune, the beauty, and the grace of Judith rendered her yielding to her son's will, in the present instance, a matter of very little difficulty.

It is true, nevertheless, that there was a certain Lady Augusta Trevors, upon whom her maternal eye had fixed itself as the absolute perfection which she should wish to possess in a daughter-in-law. But the tone and manner assumed by her really amiable and very observant son, when he informed her, on returning from Clayton Hall, that he returned an affianced man, at once convinced her that she should lose more than she was at all likely to gain by attempting to interfere with

his arrangements. Besides, the young man made out a very fair case of eligibility ; and when she saw the lovely, graceful girl who had so suddenly captivated this fastidious son, she not only ceased to wonder at the event, but, without much difficulty, became reconciled to it.

And so far, every thing had gone on smoothly ; but though Frederic was too passionately in love with Judith to be shaken for an instant in his fidelity by listening to her touching history of the adventures and distresses of her aunt and cousin, and though every feeling of his heart had led him to wish, and to promise, the exertion of his best services in assisting the young artist, it required but one moment of solitary reflection, after he had left her, to bring home to him the disagreeable fact that his mother must, sooner or later, be made acquainted with this troublesome blot in the escutcheon of her intended daughter-in-law.

Such being the case, he wisely determined to get it over immediately ; and he did so, not without perceiving that the intelligence produced a very painful sort of emotion, but without any *very* decided attempt to alter the *status quo* of affairs in consequence of it. The

whole tone and manner of the interview, however, left one fact very strongly impressed upon his mind ; namely, that if he wished to preserve *la belle harmonie* at present subsisting between his mother and Judith, his only course was to let all mention, and, if possible, all memory of the artist cousin fade and vanish out of sight and hearing as speedily as possible. The doing so had been made apparently easy by the proud forbearance of Judith herself, who avoided the mention of the Worthingtons quite as sedulously as Frederic did. And it may, therefore, easily be supposed, that this sudden proposal to visit the young artist's painting-room was equally unwelcome and unexpected. Frederic Dorling, however, had upon all occasions too much self-command to be visibly disconcerted by it. Had Judith thought proper to look at him, she would have perceived, perhaps, something of heightened colour, but his manner of saying, "Yes, certainly ; with great pleasure," in reply to Miss Elfreda's proposal, was perfectly unembarrassed ; and the result was, that, in about half an hour afterwards, they found themselves in Charles Worthington's painting-room, gazing at the portrait of the said Miss Elfreda, in her character of a Sibyl.

The manners of the two young men to each other showed plainly enough to Judith what was passing in the mind of each. Frederic was gay, friendly, and familiar ; Charles cold, reserved, and stiff. Even Miss Elfreda, though so greatly absorbed by her portrait and all that the "accomplished Mr. Frederic" said concerning it, perceived, from the unusual manner of her nephew, that he was not particularly delighted by the visit, and then she began very bitterly to reproach herself for having proposed it.

Repentance, however, came too late ; all she could now do was to affect great hurry to get home again on particular business, and the visit, therefore, was made as short as was well possible. But it was nevertheless long enough to produce a most painful effect on Judith.

Charles did not like it ; Frederic did not like it ; Mrs. Worthington disliked it extremely ; and before it was over, short as it was, Miss Elfreda felt frightened out of her wits at the mischief she had done.

But it was Judith only who felt that every look and every word that passed was of importance to the future.

She, poor girl, returned to the solitude of her own chamber sick at heart ; and it was a

sickness which beyond all others it is the most difficult for meditation to cure, for she felt in a perfect chaos of uncertainty as to what she *ought* to do. Young as she was, she felt perfectly capable of sacrificing inclination to duty, and of abiding firmly by a decision so dictated. But not for half an hour together could she keep steady in her opinion as to what that duty was. To give up Frederic, to break her promised faith to a man who had shown himself so sincerely attached to her, could not be thought of without the consciousness that she was meditating a positive sin while thinking of it. And yet the forming a connexion that she plainly saw must finally sever all that was most valuable and precious in her union with the Worthingtons, could scarcely be considered less so.

She felt, indeed, that there would be no difficulty, after she became of age, in making such pecuniary arrangements as might fully satisfy her conscience on that point ; there, at least, she was quite sure that the character and conduct of Frederic would prove perfect. But would *that* suffice to make her feel that she was fulfilling the will of her mother ?

Tears of very bitter anguish flowed down

her cheeks as her heart answered this terrible question.

Her unhappiness from all this was very greatly increased, too, by the conviction that on this subject she should not find sympathy, at least not full and entire sympathy, even from Mrs. Chilbert. She felt so sure that if she were to confess to her all she was suffering from this cause, she should be answered by reasons more in unison with the specious arguments by which her aunt Elfreda had silenced her than by any that would find an echo in her own heart, that she resolutely avoided the theme altogether in writing to her ; and the charm of this once dear correspondence was sadly lessened by the joyous tone of triumph concerning her future prospects which were addressed to her, while she was trembling as she anticipated the heart-achings to which these brilliant prospects must inevitably lead.

As yet, however, there were still many delightful hours for Judith produced by her having found these poor relations ; and she was at least rewarded for her good-natured compact with her aunt Elfreda respecting retaining the carriage, by the facility with which it enabled her to pass in Mortimer Street that precious portion of the day which

preceded all fashionable demands upon her time.

The characteristic rapidity with which Charles had seized upon all the resemblance to his aunt Elfreda which it was his purpose to convey to the canvass, soon brought the necessity for her sitting to him to an end, and her lectures and her visitings were restored to her, not more to her own satisfaction, perhaps, than to that of her sister, her niece, and her nephew; for this trio had still an immense deal to say and an immense deal to hear amongst them, in which it was quite impossible that any other human being could feel much interest.

The hours so passed were for the most part spent in the painting-room of Charles, for it was there that, very evidently, his mother best loved to be. And attraction enough might certainly be found in it, of all sorts, to prevent Judith from differing from her aunt Worthington in thinking it the most agreeable place in which they could be.

One of the *petits soins* that Judith had delighted to bestow upon her aunt, was the hiring a piano-forte and placing it in the room; for her somewhat eccentric young son was in the habit of making the arts wait upon each

other, as he called it, one stepping in to refresh the other when she was weary. And in this way the kindred voices practised and improved together in a way that might have tempted Mrs. Chilbert to doubt, had she been present there, whether after all any "position" could be found that might atone for the loss of all that might be enjoyed there.

CHAPTER XIV.

AND now the night so long fixed for Mrs. Dorking's magnificent ball arrived. Judith had been less frequently a guest in Berkeley Square than during the weeks which immediately followed their arrival in town, a circumstance which was apparently very naturally accounted for by Frederic, as arising partly from the multitude of his mother's evening engagements, which most certainly always go on with a *crescendo* movement as the London season advances; and partly, of late, also, from the state of confusion into which the drawing-rooms had been thrown by the erection of a temporary saloon over the leads, upon which the back drawing-room opened.

All this sounded very natural and necessary, and proved not only highly satisfactory

to poor Judith, but even cleared away from the mind of the sensitive Miss Elfreda every misty little idea which, at one time, had got hold of her, that Mrs. Dorking was not so devotedly attached to her daughter-in-law elect as she had appeared to be when first introduced to her.

But that misty little idea had not arisen in Miss Elfreda's sensitive mind absolutely from nothing. There was a difference,—even Frederic, the unsuspecting Frederic, was aware of that; the only question was, as to the cause of it.

Was it wholly owing to the pressure of Mrs. Dorking's engagements, and to the operations going on in her drawing-rooms? or was it wholly, or even partly, owing to the steady firmness of Judith Maitland's tone when she refused to sing on board Mrs. Dorking's picnic barge?

Judith herself had very decidedly made up her mind on the subject. Judith herself, young as she was, though now, poor thing, prematurely old from the too constant pressure of anxious thoughts, Judith herself had not the slightest doubt upon the subject. She might be rather said to know, than to think, that she had ceased to be Mrs. Dorking's pride.

and pet. And yet that accomplished lady had never yet remitted, especially in the presence of her son, any of the entirely outward and obviously visible signs of observant attention.

But, in truth, the link was broken which, for a few short weeks, had bound her willingly to the beautiful little heiress.

It has been clearly stated that the right and title of Frederic Dorking to rather a distinguished place in the English world of fashion was no doubtful one, and his mother was not a person likely to estimate this too lightly; nor can it be doubted that, had her wishes or her will regulated the choice of her son, a far more brilliant marriage than that upon which he had himself decided would have been found for him. But she had yielded without a struggle to his will; first, because she had little hope of combating it with success, and secondly, because she was quite aware that he might have chosen worse. Then came the charm of the pretty Judith herself, her beauty, her natural elegance, and her magnificent voice. Her yielding gentleness, too, went far towards removing every thing like opposition to the wishes of her son. Mrs. Dorking might have called it

later by another name ; but as long as her anxious wish to please her had given the appearance of yielding gentleness to the manner of Judith, it had really gone very far towards making her proud mother-in-law elect really and truly confess, even to herself, that she was contented with her ; for after all, perhaps, there was nothing so truly precious to Mrs. Dorking as the power of having her own way.

No great effort, therefore, can be necessary to make the reader understand, with tolerable clearness, the species of feeling likely to have been generated in the mind of this lady by the resolute composure with which Judith had refused to sing, when she had enticed a duke on board her painted bark expressly for the purpose of hearing her. There can be no occasion to dwell upon this in order to make it intelligible ; but a word or two may be necessary in defence of Judith. The character of Judith was a mixture, and by no means an uncommon one, of gentleness and firmness. Her gentleness was the effect of that peaceful sort of temperament which loves tranquillity too well to sacrifice it in a struggle for trifles. Her firmness arose from qualities that had more to do with her intellect, and less with

her constitution. Had no duty, founded both on high principle and high feeling, interfered with that which she felt due to the mother of her intended husband, Judith was very capable of schooling herself into a sort of habitual submission to Mrs. Dorking, for the sake of saving herself, and Frederic also, from any thing and every thing approaching domestic contest with her.

But no sooner had the bitter truth been made evident to her, both by her own observation and the incontrovertible reasonings of her aunt Elfreda, that if she kept her plighted faith to Frederic, she could only save herself from the utter abandonment of her aunt Worthington by a steadfast, steady, and unshrinking resolution not to yield herself to the government of Mrs. Dorking in any of her own individual actions, than she resolved at once to make that lady clearly understand that she did not consider the relation between them as one that demanded implicit obedience.

Such was the result of Judith's night thoughts; but Mrs. Dorking had her night thoughts, too, and they were quite as secret, and pretty nearly as resolute, as those of the young heiress.

It was rather more than a year before, that

is to say, it was at the very beginning of the last London season, that Mrs. Dorking had conceived a project for the marriage of her son, the disappointment of which had cost her much chagrin. The project was an ambitious project, for the lady was high-born, well endowed, and extremely lovely; and there is no doubt that when Frederic first became acquainted with her, he had neither expressed nor felt any repugnance to this high flight of maternal ambition; but ere long the young man perccived, or at any rate thought he did, that the Lady Augusta Trevors was a little capricious in her conduct towards him. There were moments when he certainly had no reason to complain of anything like a cold or repulsive manner in the high-born beauty; so much the contrary, indeed, that he began to think his mother knew what she was about, and that, perhaps, the wisest thing he could do would be to fall in love with her.

But before this dutiful idea had had time to ripen, or to take any very firm possession of him, something in the lady's manner caused him to doubt what he had before thought obvious enough; and being by no means of a disposition to endure this species of caprice, he very suddenly drew off, and the acquaint-

ance between them, which had begun to attract a little gossiping attention, dwindled away to a mere bow, to the inexpressible mortification of Mrs. Dorking.

Soon after this little flirtation had been brought to a close, the lady went to Paris with a married sister, and had remained there during the whole winter.

She was now making her re-appearance in London, handsomer than ever ; and whatever might have been the cause of the coldness which had offended Frederic, it had either vanished, or, at any rate, had not extended to his mother, for Lady Augusta's manner of renewing her acquaintance with her was peculiarly cordial and flattering.

What look, what word, what smile, or what frown of the noble beauty first put it into Mrs. Dorking's head that it was not yet too late for Frederic to win her, could his present engagement be broken, it matters not to seek for or to dwell upon.

That such a thought had entered Mrs. Dorking's head is certain ; and at first the only feeling produced by it was that of deep and bitter vexation, for she did not dare to hope that his now hateful engagement *could* be broken.

But the thought once sown, was not likely to perish in her mind, nor did it perish ; and before her long projected ball was over, she had seen so much on the part of the lady to strengthen her belief, that, despite the seeming impossibility of accomplishing her object, she suddenly determined to attempt it.

Nor was Mrs. Dorking in any degree mistaken in the notion she had conceived respecting the feelings of Lady Augusta Trevors towards her son.

Had she been equally observing or equally acute at the period of their first acquaintance, a good deal of suffering might have been spared. The facts of the case may be stated in few words ; Lady Augusta Trevors was, and had been, from the earliest period of her acquaintance with Frederic Dorking, most decisively and vehemently in love with him.

She was a beautiful, proud, high-spirited, animated, and rather intelligent girl, who, from having been the handsomest, and by much the youngest of her family, had been very completely spoiled. Naturally of a vehement and impassioned character, all her impulses grew almost into passions ; and when her eye, her fancy, nay truly, her heart itself were caught by Frederic Dorking, the young lady

almost learned to tremble herself at her own vehemence.

The variations in her manner to him must rather have done her honour than the reverse, had they been rightly understood, for they arose solely from the terrible, and but too well grounded fear, that he loved her not as she loved him.

Desperate was the struggle by which she enabled herself, first, almost to break off the acquaintance, and then to take refuge from the danger of renewing it in flight. The remedy she had applied with such praiseworthy courage had appeared to answer. It was really less from pride, than from principle, that she had acted in leaving England ; and it was the same praiseworthy impulse that not only sustained her courage, but enabled her to seek and find amusement and interest abroad.

She believed herself to be thoroughly and for ever cured of the feeling that had caused her so much suffering, and returned to London, and all its spring-tide gaiety, as fully determined to join in it, and enjoy herself, as the most heart-whole young lady in it.

One of the first things she heard after her arrival, in the way of fashionable news, was the intended marriage of Frederic Dorking,

and she bore it well. Perhaps she bore it too well, for had she felt a little less confident in her own strength, she might not have been rash enough to test it quite as severely as she did.

She retained a sort of grateful and almost affectionate recollection of the many instances of marked attention and kindness which she had received from Mrs. Dorking, and she determined, now that all danger of farther folly on her own part was so completely over, to prove to the mother of Frederic by every means in her power, not only that she remembered her kindness, but that she retained no trace of the feelings which she strongly suspected that lady once attributed to her on the subject of her son, during the dangerous month or two that preceded her departure for Paris.

The re-appearance of Lady Augusta was critical. She was in time to appear at Mrs. Dorking's ball, and certainly was one of the loveliest young women there.

But Mrs. Dorking must have been sorely disappointed, if she fancied that her appearance, brilliant as it was, could attract the attention of her son, or cause him for a single moment to forget that Judith was there also, there as his affianced wife, and lovelier, oh !

lovelier far, than any other fair one in the room, let her claims to beauty be what they might.

But though Frederic really seemed to forget that there was any other woman there who deserved to be looked at, the case was different with Judith. She was greatly struck with the beauty of Lady Augusta Trevors, and looked at her repeatedly with such marked attention, that her beautiful ladyship could scarcely fail to observe it ; and having learnt,—for who in the room had not ? that the slight, bright-eyed creature who gazed at her so earnestly was the young Indian heiress to whom her once worshipped Frederic was about to be married, she took it into her speculating head and resolute heart, that she should like to be introduced to her.

“That will be *la pierre de touche*,” thought she. “If I can really stand and look at her, and talk to her without wincing, I may consider my cure as perfect.”

And in pursuance of this whim, and, perhaps, a little for the purpose of displaying to Mrs. Dorking how far she was from ever having thought of Frederic herself, she begged that lady to do her the honour of presenting Miss Maitland to her. “I understand that she is to be nearly related to you some day, Mrs.

Dorking," said she ; "besides I think her *so* pretty!"

So the presentation took place, and Mrs. Dorking, after having performed the ceremony required of her, thought proper to stand beside the two beautiful girls for a few minutes, for the purpose, probably, of watching the effect of this interview upon Lady Augusta.

And there it was, and then it was, that the keen-eyed Mrs. Dorking looked for, found, and noted enough of emotion in that expressive and beautiful face, to persuade her that if, *par impossible*, her son Frederic could be led to woo, Lady Augusta Trevors might still, *very possibly*, be won.

CHAPTER XV.

THE feelings of the particularly ill-assorted party, which I have mentioned as having assembled before the portrait of Miss Elfreda Jenkyns in the painting-room of Charles Worthington, were not, as I have already told the reader, either collectively or individually, agreeable, and, with one single exception, every person who had been there present, determined that, as far as he or she were concerned, the same ill-assorted party should not assemble there again.

This exception was to be found in the person of Frederic Dorking. As to the various feelings and various reasons which led the rest of the party to form the above-mentioned resolution, they are all, I think, too obvious to require explanation. But not so as to the

contrary opinion entertained on the subject by Frederic.

Though very far from being prone to suspect or discover motives and feelings in his fellow creatures which it was their wish to keep concealed, Frederic did suspect that his lovely Judith was not, or perhaps he only went so far as to think she *might* not be, perfectly contented with the degree of notice which he and his mother (his father counted for no more than the crest on their armorial bearings) had taken of her artist cousin.

He had not quite forgotten, though he did not quite like to remember, how explicitly he had promised Judith that he should be patronised ; and he had not at all forgotten, though it was extremely disagreeable to him to remember, that nothing of any kind whatever had been done to redeem this promise. To himself and his own conscience he stood more than excused for this, by knowing that neither airs nor idleness had had any share in his remissness, but that he had remained inert, and in a great degree uncertain, as to what it might be best to do, in order to please his future wife without desperately offending his mother.

But all these obliging thoughts concerning

Charles, and the services he still hoped to render him, were wholly distinct from any notion of cultivating his acquaintance as a gentleman, as a companion, or even as an acquaintance, who might occasionally visit at his father's house. The visiting at his father's house, indeed, was so totally out of the question, that the idea never even occurred to him in the shape of an annoyance, from his feeling that it was either probable or possible. But he often thought, and with all his characteristic good nature, that when he and Judith were married, they might perhaps often receive him, and his poor sickly-looking mother too, in a quiet way, and be really a comfort to them.

But as to his fine mother, and her fine house, being a comfort to any one, he was much too rational for any such idea to enter his head ; and thus between his own good intentions, and his consciousness that it was better to keep his mother altogether clear of what he certainly felt to be an embarrassment, he had not troubled himself much about the matter, till this compulsory visit to the young man's painting-room had brought all his promised patronage back to his memory ; while, at the same time, he fancied that there was

something a little like a cloud on the fair brow of his beautiful Judith.

Instead, therefore, of leaving Mortimer Street with any determination of avoiding it for the future, he made a strong mental memorandum, as he turned from the door, that he would not permit himself again to become so thoughtlessly oblivious of those who dwelt there.

And how did he redeem this self-made promise ? The manner, considering all the circumstances, was whimsical enough.

The Lady Augusta Trevors would not have been greatly flattered, could she have been made aware how very complete the oblivion of herself and her beauty had been in the mind of Frederic Dorking, after she had withdrawn herself from the circles in which he used to meet her. Even the caprice of which he had believed her guilty, had not only been forgiven, but utterly forgotten; and when he saw her enter his mother's ball-room, his only thought concerning her was that she really looked handsomer than ever, and that she certainly was a very lovely girl indeed.

But a vastly stronger degree of interest in her was awakened when he saw her in the act of talking, with an air of very flattering atten-

tion, to his Judith. He immediately joined them, shook hands very cordially with Lady Augusta,—but without perceiving, as his mother did, that she trembled from head to foot,—and immediately asked her to dance.

He was in high spirits, and rattled away on all sorts of subjects at a great rate. He was pleased with his mother's brilliant ball, pleased with his beautiful Judith, and pleased with her beautiful dress. He was pleased, too, very much pleased, by the notice which Lady Augusta Trevors seemed disposed to take of her.

"She is so clever, too, this Lady Augusta!" thought he. "There is nothing that could be so useful to Judith as getting intimate with her."

And as this thought entered his gay head, he rather abruptly asked his partner what she thought of Miss Maitland?

Had poor Lady Augusta felt less agitation in replying to this question, it is very possible that she would have shown more, or, at least, that she would have been less eager to dilate upon the subject thus opened, but which she now pursued with a degree of energetic warmth that perfectly succeeded in persuading Frederic, not only of her unbounded admiration, but

also of her eager wish to cultivate the acquaintance. The idea delighted him; and he told her so.

Nothing could be further from Lady Augusta's wish, and intention, than to act a false part towards the happy, but unoffending rival, now so strongly recommended to her friendship. But she felt that she had got into a scrape, and saw no better way of getting out of it, than submitting for the time to the sort of entanglement into which her own imprudence had thrown her.

She answered, therefore, very graciously; and thereupon a new, and as he fancied, a very brilliant idea suggested itself to him.

"How very kind you are!" said he. "I assure you, Lady Augusta, that I know no one whose friendship I should feel so delighted to obtain for her. And by the by, as you are a personage of great fashion and influence, you might do her an immense kindness."

"As how?" returned Lady Augusta, quite determined to perform the kindness, let it be what it would.

"Oh! it is a very long story!" he replied; "a perfect romance, and not, I assure you, without a great deal of romantic interest. My sweet Judith, of whom you speak so kindly,

had an aunt—or rather, to speak more correctly, *has* an aunt, who, *malheureusement*, naughty young lady, fell in love with her drawing-master, and married him. Of course she was obliged to elope, you know, and her fortune fell into her artistic husband's power, unsettled ; the natural result of which is, that the run-away lady, who is now a widow, is left, together with her only son, in a state of worse than romantic distress, for I am sadly afraid that it is very real. However, the said son, who by the way is really one of the most magnificently handsome young fellows I ever saw in my life, has turned out to be a first-rate genius in the painting line, and all this long story is to end by my telling your ladyship that I want you to patronise him. I wish to heaven you would let him paint your portrait! It would make his fortune—I am quite certain of it!"

This long speech gave Lady Augusta time to recover herself. It gave time, too, for many thoughts, which made a sudden, yet deep impression upon her.

Her heart throbbed with astonishment, and perhaps also with admiration, at the nobly independent spirit displayed by Frederic in this frank avowal of the humble station of the

nearest relatives of his future wife. There was something in her eyes, poor young lady, perfectly extraordinary, and it might be perfectly sublime in this. And there would be sublimity, too,—she felt there would be very great sublimity, in her conquering all the petty feelings that the sight of Judith inspired, and becoming the patroness of her poor relations.

She had no great leisure at that moment to examine into the prudence of the measure, as concerned herself; and she therefore scrupled not to reply to his proposal by at once acceding to his request, in the most frank and friendly manner possible.

“I must leave the whole arrangement to you, Mr. Dorking,” she added; “but if you will settle with the young artist the day, and hour, of my coming to him, and will let me know where his painting-room is, I will take care to be punctual to the appointment.”

“Is it possible that you really will have this extreme kindness?” exclaimed Frederic, touched by the friendly readiness with which she had complied with his request. “Depend upon it that you shall find every thing ready for you, at any day and hour that you will have the kindness to mention.”

"Would it not be much more agreeable for me if I could be accompanied, on my first visit, by Miss Maitland?" returned Lady Augusta, in accordance with another sublime suggestion of her fertile imagination.

"She would be perfectly enchanted by being permitted to perform such an office!" replied Frederic; "for one great part of our romance consists in there having been a dying request addressed to Miss Maitland by her mother, to the effect that she would do all in her power to assist her imprudent, but, I believe, very amiable aunt."

"Then manage *this* for me also, Mr. Dorking," replied her ladyship.

"Shall we say to-morrow?" said Frederic. "No, not to-morrow!" he added, correcting himself, "for I am in hopes, Lady Augusta, that you will dance too late to-night to make it at all desirable that you should sit for your portrait to-morrow. It would not be fair to the artist, nor would it be fair to you, fair as you are, to take your charming features at a disadvantage."

Poor Lady Augusta trembled like a leaf shaken by the wind. But she appeared to be looking at somebody that she saw passing in

the distance, and presently resumed the conversation, by saying,

"It shall be Saturday, then, Mr. Dorking, if that day will suit both Miss Maitland and her cousin?"

Was there any naughty little feeling mixed with this allusion to the near relationship between the artist and the future Mrs. Dorking? Let us hope not. But even if there were, the vexed condition of the speaker ought to be taken into the account.

Lady Augusta Trevors was by no means a very bad-hearted or a very ill-tempered girl. But, at that moment, she was suffering very severely.

If there were, indeed, any thing of the kind in her thoughts, the affianced Frederic did not perceive it, and again very cordially thanking her, only waited till the present waltz was over before he hurried off to Judith, told her all he had done, and the successful result of it; and hurried back again to the Lady Augusta, with the assurance of much gratitude, and a promise that Judith would be at No. — Mortimer Street, Cavendish Square, punctually at two o'clock on Saturday.

This appointment was, perhaps, the most remarkable occurrence that took place at this

costly and very magnificent ball. And, at any rate, the two young ladies concerned in it had it more freshly in their heads, when they waked on the morrow, than any other adventure they had met with.

CHAPTER XVI.

NOTWITHSTANDING the late hour at which Judith went to bed, it was not at a late hour on the following morning that she appeared in Mortimer Street, to announce to Charles Worthington the very important news, that a sitter, of great fashion and high rank, intended to wait upon him on the morrow.

"To wait upon me to-morrow?" repeated Charles, looking half petrified. "And what am I to do with her?"

"Do with her?" repeated the happy Judith, laughing more gaily than she had done for many weeks,—"do with her, cousin Charles? Why you must paint her!"

"Impossible, Judith! This fine titled lady coming to have her portrait taken by me?—I

am quite sure that you must be joking. It is so very improbable! Is it not, mamma?"

"Not if the lady is a friend of Judith's," replied Mrs. Worthington.

"I never saw her in my life till last night," said Judith, "so of the extent of her friendship for me, I will give you leave to guess. No, no; she is Frederic Dorking's friend, not mine; but you must not like her the worse for that, Charles! I begin now to fancy, that the reason why we have had no sitters before is, that Frederic had not been able to find any one that he thought sufficiently beautiful to inspire you properly. And, certainly, if beauty is what he has been seeking for, he has not waited in vain, for I really think this Lady Augusta is the most beautiful person I ever saw."

"How shall we take her, Judith?" cried Charles, evidently delighted by this description of his model. "Is she at all in your style, cousin?"

"In my style? Do you mean to ask if she is like me?" said Judith, laughing.

"I do not suppose she is like you," said Charles, colouring. "I did not mean to ask so stupid a question as that. The chances are not much in favour of any one's being like

you. I only wanted to know if she was young and slight?"

"Young, certainly," replied Judith, "though I do not suppose she is such a baby chit as I am. And if by slight, you mean exactly what a beautiful young woman ought to be, I say yes, though she is not such a thread-paper sort of thing as myself."

"But in what way shall I take her?" said he. "In what sort of dress, I mean, and in what sort of attitude?"

Judith reflected for a moment, and then said, "I should like you to make a full-length portrait of her; and I should like that she should be dressed either in a very lovely fancy dress, Greek or Persian. Or if she *must* be taken as a woman of fashion, let it be in white satin, garnished with black lace."

"That would do, mamma, would it not?" said Charles, looking greatly delighted, and yet a little anxious too.

"I think you must see the lady before you can decide," replied Mrs. Worthington. "But as to its being full-length, Judith," she added, "it is quite impossible that Charles should propose that, because the expense would be so very much greater. As a young, and unknown artist, it would be exceed-

ingly ungentlemanlike for him to propose a full-length."

"I will not propose it, *mamma mia*, because it would be presumptuous, artistically speaking," said Charles. "About its being gentlemanlike,—*non so*; I suspect that I am more sonlike than gentlemanlike. Thou wantest money, mother mine! Then what care I how rude I be?"

Judith looked at him with a feeling which it would be difficult to express. Judith liked Mrs. Chilbert because she was ladylike, (at least that was one reason,) and she liked the dean because he was gentlemanlike, and she greatly wished to be ladylike herself. And yet, at that moment, she felt as if she could have kneeled down before her cousin Charles merely because he repudiated the name of gentleman!

The morrow came, and it brought the Lady Augusta Trevors to Mortimer Street, precisely at two o'clock.

She looked round upon the group of three, by which she was received in the painting-room, with great interest, and she was greatly struck with the aspect of the young artist himself. It was not merely his remarkable personal advantages which produced this

effect ; in her estimation Frederic Dorking was a thousand times handsomer than Charles Worthington. But she thought, and perhaps she was not much mistaken, that he looked like a remarkable person. And then she looked at Judith ; and then she looked at Charles again. They were not alike, no, not the least alike ; and yet the Lady Augusta found an extraordinary sort of intellectual sympathy between them.

In the conversation which almost immediately followed her entrance, and which, of course, turned upon the style and costume of the portrait which had brought her there, she observed that every idea suggested by the one, however slightly hinted, was instantly comprehended to the fullest extent by the other. And she truly and greatly admired the evidently brilliant talents of both.

But she could not speculate very deeply upon this at present, though the theme was one of considerable interest ; for their meeting was a matter of business, and as such it was treated in every word that passed between the young artist and his noble sitter.

“In what style, and of what size, would your ladyship wish the picture to be ?” demanded Charles.

"I wish it to be a full-length, of the size of life," replied Lady Augusta, who having come there for the express purpose of patronising the cousin of Miss Maitland, was quite determined (without thinking of a pun) not to do it by halves.

Charles bowed, but without speaking.

"And as to the costume?" said Lady Augusta. "Has your cousin ever taken *your* portrait, Miss Maitland?"

"Oh, no!" replied Judith, laughing. "I never have thought of having my portrait taken, but I think I will one of these days."

"And what is your notion about the important matter of costume?" said Lady Augusta.

"In the case of your ladyship? Or in my own?" said Judith.

"This young lady is inclined to be familiar without loss of time," was the thought to which the matter of fact question of Judith gave rise in the breast of Lady Augusta; and yet the fair patrician had often boasted herself, in secret to her own soul, as "too high-minded to be proud." And in some sort she was right, too. Nevertheless, I have recorded her thought on this occasion very faithfully.

Her rejoinder, however, was as she intended

it should be, exceedingly affable. "I am afraid," said she, "that I was so egotistical as to be thinking of myself. And I really should be very much obliged if you would let me hear your opinion."

"I have just been telling my cousin Charles," replied Judith, "that if you were not taken in a fancy costume, I should recommend white satin and black lace. And if the spirit of Vandyke would inspire him, I do not think he could have a better subject."

"How very clever! yet how very strange!" thought Lady Augusta, looking from the one cousin to the other, as if to consult them concerning the picture; but in truth examining them after her manner, and according to her lights, very philosophically, and rapidly coming to the satisfactory conclusion that artist blood must be in the veins of both.

But while she meditated, much to her own satisfaction, upon this curious phenomenon, Judith and Charles were muttering apart about one or two little preparatory arrangements in the painting-room, which must precede the sitting.

"Fancy a girl engaged to be married to Frederic Dorking calling a portrait-painter cousin Charles!" thought Lady Augusta.

"And fancy Mrs. Dorking submitting to it, and actually receiving her, and taking her to Court! It is absolutely incredible! Perhaps this cousin Judith was originally intended for an artist herself: it is highly probable from her style of talking about it, and she really seems to have some very pretty notions. It is a pity her natural vocation should have been ever changed. It will not answer! *They must be miserable!*"

"It will take at least a day to get a canvass of the necessary size prepared and strained," said Charles, approaching the meditative lady, "and therefore I will beg your ladyship to return here on Wednesday at the same hour, when I will have every thing prepared; and perhaps, in the interval, you will have the kindness to decide upon the dress?"

"Oh! as to the dress, I have quite decided that already," replied Lady Augusta. "I assure you I mean to profit by your cousin's charming suggestion. It is quite evident to me that she is gifted with a thoroughly artist-like taste. Do you not think so yourself, Mr. Worthington?"

"I really do," replied the young man, colouring, and looking much pleased at what he considered as an amiable as well as de-

served compliment to his cousin; "and nothing, I think, could prove this more," he added, "than her fixing upon Vandyke as the source from which she would wish me, upon the present occasion, to derive my inspiration, for it is exactly what the subject asks for."

This, too, was a very pretty compliment, though the aristocratic beauty to whom it was addressed did not comprehend it, for there was no mixture of plebeian artisticality in *her* blood.

However, upon the whole she was extremely well pleased by her visit, and pledged herself to be punctual to the day and hour that had been named for her next visit.

"But if I am punctual, my dear Miss Maitland, I hope you will be punctual too," said Lady Augusta, when taking leave of Judith. "Remember that I never intend to sit unless you will promise to sit with me."

Judith hesitated, and looked at her aunt and her cousin before she replied to this flattering, but very unexpected request. She remembered that Charles had objected to her being present at Miss Elfreda's first sitting, and though the strictness of this regulation had been subsequently relaxed, and her presence permitted, she did not feel at all sure

that the business of painting a portrait of Lady Augusta Trevors might not go on better without her.

Judith and her cousin Charles had other faculties in common besides their love of art, although as yet her ladyship had not found it out ; and the painter's cousin felt, that if the painter took it into his head only to look as if he were conscious of any of the exclusive style of airs and graces which she had herself found it so very easy to discover in the young lady who was so graciously disposed to patronise him, an answering look on her part might do mischief ; for it appeared to her that Charles had neither the will nor the power of concealing his thoughts, by converting a smile into a look of solemnity.

In short, she was afraid of him, and her hesitation therefore ended by her saying that she feared she must not be indulged with the honour of being present at the sittings, for the artist would probably feel it to be an interruption.

But if Judith had some faculties for which her elegant new acquaintance did not give her credit, that elegant new acquaintance also possessed others, for which Judith in like manner gave her no credit at all. Among

these was a quiet, ladylike steadfastness of purpose, which often enabled her to have her own way in many cases where more vehement wilfulness might have failed. She did not leave Charles Worthington's painting-room that morning before she had contrived to make him say that he thought, from what she stated of her own habits and feelings, it would be more advantageous to the work that her ladyship should have Miss Maitland present to converse with her.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE results of that morning's consultation were various. The individual who, in the first instance, profited the most by it, was decidedly Charles. It was, in fact, with a very near approach to perfect happiness that he was left *tête-à-tête* with his mother, after Judith, at the interval of about half an hour, had followed Lady Augusta out of the house.

That same half-hour, too, had not passed without calling forth some very delightful feelings; for Judith, with all the sanguine hopefulness of her age and character, had declared, and really felt herself convinced, that if Charles could only succeed as well in painting the portrait of the beautiful Lady Augusta, as he had done in painting that of their not beautiful aunt Elfreda, his fortune would be made.

To this prophecy Mrs. Worthington had listened with very great pleasure, and not without a good deal of faith; and when she and her darling son were left alone together—that darling son, who had so admirably cheered and supported her through all their complicated sorrows, difficulties, and embarrassments—when he stood smiling on her, the very personification of hope and joy, she could not, much as she had known grief, and heavily as at some points that grief still pressed upon her, she could not resist the exhilarating effects of his predictions that he should yet live to see her as happy as his own heart could wish.

“And if at last it should be my doing, *mamma mia!*” he exclaimed, “shall you not welcome it more joyously than any thing that could have come to you by inheritance?”

And what was the result of this morning’s work as far as related to Lady Augusta Trevors? That really elegant and really beautiful personage had been attended to Mr. Worthington’s painting-room by a very respectable and very stiff old waiting-gentlewoman, whose long residence in the family seemed to give her a right to belong to it; and Lady Augusta, upon this, as well as upon many other occasions, preferred her respectfully

silent attendance to that of any of the useful class of elderly ladies whose chaperonship was always at her command.

But Lady Augusta never gossiped with this convenient personage, and scarcely a word now passed between them on their road towards Belgrave Square.

But the less Lady Augusta spoke, the more she thought of all she had seen and all she had heard that morning; and, by the time the carriage had very nearly reached her home, she felt so absolutely oppressed by the weight of her own thoughts, that she suddenly pulled the check-string, and ordered it to turn round, and drive to Mrs. Dorking's in Berkeley Square.

Very greatly to her satisfaction, she was admitted to the two-pair of stairs boudoir of that luxurious lady, and found her, notwithstanding the inevitable confusion that the ball had left in the mansion, in calm and uninterrupted enjoyment of one of the very prettiest rooms in London. Mrs. Dorking was quite aware that it was so, and was rather glad of any excuse for receiving visitors there, instead of in the drawing-room. But before the conversation which followed Lady Augusta's admission there is repeated, it is proper to

mention that her ladyship *presumed* that her secret sentiments for the son of her much admired friend Mrs. Dorking, were as completely unknown to her as she was quite sure they were to the young man himself; and she therefore believed that she might safely indulge herself in the closest possible cross-examination of the how, when, and where the unaccountable attachment had been formed, which was to convert the matchless Frederic Dorking into the cousin-german of an unknown portrait-painter.

Mrs. Dorking's feelings and wishes respecting the young lady who thus unexpectedly appeared before her, have been already sufficiently explained to render any comment upon her part of the ensuing dialogue unnecessary.

"How are you, my dearest Mrs. Dorking?" began her ladyship. "Your ball was positively divine; but I fear you must have been dreadfully fatigued! I longed to come and inquire for you yesterday, but I was particularly engaged elsewhere. Tell me, dear lady, how are you?"

"I am well in health, my dear young friend," replied Mrs. Dorking, sighing. "Giving a ball is not a sort of thing that ever injures my health."

"Injure your health? No; for you do it so admirably, that it seems as if you were born for it! But, nevertheless, I feared that you might be fatigued. And where do you think I have been this morning, my dear Mrs. Dorking?"

"Where? What an ample field for guessing lies before me! I am lost in it!"

"Then I must help you," said Lady Augusta, with an odd sort of smile, which had perhaps a slight mixture of the sneer in it. "I went to sit for my portrait to a young artist, for whom your son seems particularly interested. His name, I think, is Worthington,—Mr. Charles Worthington."

The face of Mrs. Dorking became crimson, and she uttered not a single syllable in reply.

"Of course, I need not tell you at whose request it was that I went there?" resumed Lady Augusta.

"Spare me! spare me!" ejaculated Mrs. Dorking, drawing out her pocket-handkerchief, and pressing it to her eyes.

"Forgive me, my dear, dear Mrs. Dorking!" cried Lady Augusta, affectionately taking her hand. "Not for the universe would I willingly have said any thing to pain you! But how was it possible for me to guess?"

"No, no, no ! you could not guess ! Nobody can guess ! But I sometimes think, my dear young friend, that it will kill me !"

"I know I ought to grieve at hearing you say this," said Lady Augusta, mournfully. "And I do grieve ! indeed, indeed, I do, that you should be unhappy on any subject ! But yet, if I guess rightly as to the cause of the sorrow you now express, I hardly know how I could wish you to feel otherwise."

"Surely, Lady Augusta, you could never for a moment have supposed that I should approve of the extraordinary connexion that my son proposes to form ?"

"Nay, my dear Mrs. Dorking, till now I had no means of guessing this. I heard that Miss Maitland was a beauty, and an heiress, and heard nothing more."

"True, my dear ! most true. There are many people, I have no doubt, who think I have every reason to be satisfied. But you are one of the last who *ought* to think so."

"I ? I do not understand you," said Lady Augusta, colouring highly, and looking half angry and half anxious.

"Forgive me ! and do not seek to understand me. If you knew all I have suffered ! all the cruel, cruel disappointments, I cannot

but think you would pity me ! But it is idle to talk in this way. Only tell me what on earth it was which induced your ladyship to go to this man to have your portrait taken ?”

“ How can you ask me such a question, Mrs. Dorking ? How is it possible that I could have gone there excepting at your son’s request ?”

“ It is inconceivable ! ” cried Mrs. Dorking. “ Might one not have imagined he would have felt some repugnance ? Some feeling a little approaching natural shame ? ”

“ One might have thought so. And in the young woman also, Miss Maitland I mean, one might have expected some feeling a little indicative of consciousness that her near relationship to this young man was a misfortune, or, at any rate, a disadvantage to her,” said Lady Augusta. “ But no ; she positively gives one every reason to suppose that she is excessively proud of it ! ”

“ Did she then talk to you, Lady Augusta, about these dreadful people ? Did she actually begin on the subject, and ask your patronage for them, the very hour and moment that she was introduced to you ? ” said Mrs. Dorking, in most unfeigned astonishment.

"No ; but your son did," replied Lady Augusta.

"It is inconceivable ! even in him, bewildered as he is in this most unfortunate passion ! It is perfectly inconceivable that he should voluntarily have disclosed this disgraceful circumstance to you. As to the girl herself, far as she may be, oh ! far as from pole to pole, to what I might have wished for my son, there was nothing at all disgraceful, or in any way objectionable, had I not once deluded myself with better hopes. Her father was a well-born gentleman, and a distinguished officer. Her fortune already exceeds, as I am told, two thousand a-year, and she has relations living in what we must allow to be perfectly the situation of gentlewomen, from whom she expects considerably more. The girl too, herself, though to you I will confess that I detest her, is considered as vastly beautiful and vastly accomplished. How then could I dream that it was my duty to attempt any opposition to the declared intentions of my poor deluded Frederic ? All the world knows that he is perfectly independent of us, having seven thousand a-year of his own. The only being that I ever cast my eyes upon, with a wish that she should be my daughter, was far away,

and, in an evil hour, I consented to his earnest desire that I should call upon her. But need I tell you that I was totally ignorant, at that time, of the disgraceful connexions which have been now brought forward ? In fact, the only person that I ever heard named in connexion with her was Mrs. Chilbert, the wife of the dean of Westhampton, and there was nothing in this that one could reasonably object to. For though you and I know perfectly well that no one, in any way professional, is ever very cordially admitted within certain circles, we nevertheless yield a sort of conventional respect both to the woolsack and the bench, which, of course, extends itself, in a degree, to what approximates to them ; and, in fact, this Mrs. Chilbert herself, whenever she comes to town, is constantly met in really good society. So that I scarcely know how to blame myself for yielding to what was almost compulsion—but a compulsion certainly not disgraceful. Guess, then, what must have been my feelings when Frederic, in the lightest and most *nonchalante* manner possible, gave me to understand that my intended daughter-in-law was nearly related to an artist ! I will not dwell upon what I suffered. I think, sweet love, that you may easily imagine it. But from

that hour to this, Frederic has never made any further allusion to the hateful subject. Guess, then, my astonishment at now hearing that he has actually mentioned the disgraceful fact to you!"

Lady Augusta Trevors listened to the whole of this long speech with immovable, and most earnest attention. Nor was it till some few minutes after Mrs. Dorking had ceased speaking, that she attempted to reply to her.

But during this interval her thoughts had been busy, very busy, carrying on, and bringing to decision, a most important question which she had set herself to solve.

If an eagle could be endowed with reason, and was commanded by Jupiter to decide whether the union of a bird of his own noble species with a hedge sparrow was likely to be productive of domestic happiness in his lofty nest, the said eagle could not more conscientiously have pronounced a negative, than did the Lady Augusta Trevors when she asked herself whether she believed a marriage between Frederic Dorking and the cousin-german of a professional portrait-painter could by possibility be a happy one.

She had been greatly startled, on the night of the ball, at learning that such a relationship

existed; and a strong movement of curiosity to know, and understand, a little more about it, had led her not only to consent that her own portrait should be taken by this cousin, but to invite Miss Maitland to accompany her.

"If I see them together," thought she, "I shall be a better judge of the sort of tone upon which the most elegant man in London will be expected to live with an artist."

But if she pitied the unhappy young man's infatuation before her visit to Mortimer Street, what were her feelings afterwards? Pity was magnified into perfect agony on his account, as she witnessed the unmitigated familiarity between the cousins.

"Fancy Frederic Dorking hearing his wife called to, as 'Judith,' by a man who gets his bread by painting portraits! Poor dear Frederic! my heart aches for him. He has not found out yet all the killing mortifications he will have to endure. But when it comes upon him, and come it must, I should not wonder if it were to drive him mad. Gracious Heaven! Frederic Dorking dying in a mad-house!"

This was the agonizing train of thought, and this was the fearful image that suggested itself to the more than ever enamoured Lady Au-

gusta as she drove homeward from Charles Worthington's painting-room; and then it was, that with a sort of desperate hope of doing *something*, she pulled the check-string with a very sudden jerk, and ordered her carriage to Berkeley Square.

That resolving to do *something* is always a very vague resolution, and certainly in the case of Lady Augusta it was particularly so; but yet there was a sensation like relief in it, and this relief was very pleasantly increased by the unexpectedly confidential tone of Mrs. Dorking's conversation.

It took the much agitated Lady Augusta but one short moment of doubt before she decided that she too would be as confidential to her partial and dearly valued friend. And then, as it is easy to understand, matters went on at a rapid rate between them.

Mrs. Dorking touched delicately on her past hopes, and still more delicately hinted that nothing had prevented their realization but the cruel departure of Lady Augusta for the continent.

And then Lady Augusta, with very graceful frankness, avowed her preference to Frederic, but added that she doubted if it had ever been returned.

And then Mrs. Dorking, with all the authority of one who knows what she is talking about, assured her she was mistaken ; and that she had left an aching and deeply disappointed heart with her poor Frederic. And then Lady Augusta wept, and wished that she had never left England at all.

And so they went on, till having passed two hours together in uninterrupted *tête-à-tête*, a series of experiments were imagined and decided upon between them, by which they thought it likely they should discover how far their poor deluded Frederic might still be within reach of having his eyes opened to the certain misery he was preparing for himself by being entrapped into such a marriage !

CHAPTER XVIII.

JUDITH, too, went home from Mortimer Street with a good deal to think about, as well as Lady Augusta ; but, unlike her ladyship, her thoughts were not at all about herself, or her own feelings. Her destiny was settled, and but for its incongruity with that of her most dear and near relatives, she would have been very reasonably happy in the prospect before her. But now she thought not of herself at all, she thought only of Charles.

She had been almost as much delighted as he was himself at the opening which Lady Augusta's sitting for him seemed to make, in the way of his profession. She had great faith in his talent, and, if possible, greater still in the simplicity and firmness of purpose with which he gave himself to it. Conscious

of great talent in every way she thought he must be, and yet how utterly indifferent and unmindful did he appear of all, save that by which he hoped to support his mother !

His seemingly utter unconsciousness, too, of his own very remarkable personal advantages, and the vigorous economy which he observed in his dress, as well as in every thing else in which himself alone was concerned, altogether formed a character that it was impossible to contemplate without admiration, esteem, and love. And Judith felt all this for him, and moreover, a feeling of joyousness and amusement in his society when listening to the lively and original sallies of his ever-teeming imagination and his buoyant spirits, greater, perhaps, than she had ever enjoyed any where.

But all this was tempered, sobered, and in some degree shorn of the bright enjoyment which it might have caused under other circumstances, by the constant anxiety she felt lest he should not obtain his proper footing in society.

There was so much appearance of frank good-humour in the tone of Frederic Dorking, whenever he chanced to meet Charles in Green Street, that Judith shut her eyes wilfully, and pertinaciously, against the obvious meaning of

all the omissions in common civility, which his never having called upon him made so remarkable.

Miss Elfreda stood too much in awe of the whole Dorking family to venture any remark upon it; and feelings, both of delicacy and pride, effectually prevented Mrs. Worthington from alluding to it; and as to Charles, he positively thought so little of himself, individually, that he might almost be said to be unconscious of the fact that his cousin that was to be took no notice of him, excepting when they happened to meet by accident.

All he thought of, all he cared for, was the disappointment in the hopes he had formed of finding employment by the interest of his cousin Judith's intended husband.

Judith, therefore, was the only one of the party who really suffered at all from this neglect; but she did suffer, and every day that passed made her suffer more, for every day that passed made her more alive to the high talent and noble qualities which deserved all attention and all kindness, and also to the very obvious fact, that by Frederic Dorking and his family none would be shown.

How long this state of things would have been permitted to go on before Judith made

up her mind to remonstrate, if nothing had occurred to change its aspect, it is impossible to say. But this bold experiment of the portrait, on the part of Lady Augusta, was very likely to bring matters to a crisis.

Judith had fully expected that Frederic would at least have shown himself in the painting-room of her cousin, for the purpose of presenting the young artist to the lady whose patronage he had asked for and obtained ; and great was her disappointment as well as her surprise at not seeing him there.

But even these feelings, strong as they were, seemed forgotten when she saw the sort of kindling eagerness in the countenance of Charles, as he looked at the beautiful features which were to form the subject of his first great effort to convert the profession he had so pertinaciously embraced to the provision of comforts for his mother. She felt assured of his success ; and the joy, the delight which this idea gave her, not only made her forget that Frederic was absent, but made her forget, also, all the pretty little affected *minauderies* displayed by the fair sitter, though they had been only a few minutes before almost too much for her gravity.

And then it was that she and her cousin

discussed together the attitude, the position of the hands, and so forth; and then they called each other freely and repeatedly by their christian names, which perhaps was what completed the conviction that had begun to take root in the noble young lady's mind, that she was positively bound by duty to prevent, by some means or other, so preposterous an alliance as that of Frederic Dorking with this inconceivably strange "*cousin Judith*."

But when she was fairly gone, the frolic joy of Charles put a stop to all artistic discussion whatever, and neither his mother nor Judith could resist the contagion, and their gaiety banished every thing that was not pleasant from all their thoughts.

Judith, however, at length so far recovered her discretion, as to remember that she had promised her aunt Elfreda to return in time to take a drive with her in the park.

"And do you take a drive, too, aunt Penelope!" said Judith, coaxingly. "I am quite sure it will do you good, and tranquillize your nerves after all the riot your wild son has been making. Come with me, will you?"

"Not if I am to keep the engagement you have made for me this evening, Judith. I cannot do both," replied Mrs. Worthington.

"Oh, most true ! This is dear Mr. Carey's evening ; and I would not let you miss it for the world. His parties are worth all the rest that I go to in London. Adieu, then, till to-night. The carriage shall come for you at the usual time."

These weekly parties at the house of Mr. Carey *were* very decidedly, in Judith's estimation, the most agreeable in London ; which preference might in some degree have been accorded to them, because it was there only that as yet she had ever had the pleasure of being accompanied by her aunt Worthington. Charles had not gone out with them much, for Miss Elfreda trembled at the idea of compromising her own hardly-worked for position, by hazarding the introduction of the young unknown, who upon inquiry might be discovered to have had a poor man for his father ; and it was only by delicate degrees that Judith had contrived to have him occasionally taken where she thought it might be agreeable to him to go.

But of late this part of his history had begun to assume a new aspect. The Careys had found out that he could not only accompany his cousin in a style greatly superior to her own, but that he could sing himself, and

in a manner that only needed to be heard once in order to make it clamorously sought for again. So that for the last week or two he had been quite as much in society as he wished to be,—for he was too gaily light-hearted to be vain, and felt not the slightest pleasure in displaying his talents for the amusement of strangers,—such a degree of intimacy being necessary for his enjoyment as cannot be easily found or formed in the large parties of the full London season.

But the house of Mr. Carey was an exception to all this; for though large parties occasionally assembled there, they for the most part consisted of persons who contributed to the pleasure of society as much as they enjoyed it, and amongst them Charles soon found himself at home.

To Mrs. Worthington, too, there was real pleasure in going there; for both Mr. Carey and his very charming wife had not only known and loved her in her younger days, but they were among the very few who really knew her lamented husband. Imprudent as the act had been by which she became his wife, the Carey family were well disposed to pardon her, for they had known him as none other of her acquaintance had done.

The freemasonry of talent had been between them.

Such being the terms on which the Washingtons were received there, it may easily be guessed why it was that Judith felt considerably more pleasure in going to Mr. Carey's parties than to any other. And that the feeling which caused this preference was a strong one was proved by the fact that it still continued, though (more than once invited and more than once engaged to go there) Frederic Dorking had never yet made his appearance in Mr. Carey's little drawing-room in Davies Street.

Judith might have been more vexed at this than she was, had she not constructed a theory of her own on the subject. This ingenious theory taught her to believe that Frederic would have enjoyed the little drawing-room exceedingly, had not his vain and very stupid mother prevented his making himself acquainted with it.

This theory she had very ingeniously invented for her own particular consolation some weeks ago, but on this evening it seemed to fail her. She was, for the first time perhaps, really angry with Frederic. She felt, for the first time also, that he had failed in civility as

well as in affection, in not being present when, as he well knew, she had engaged to meet Lady Augusta Trevors in Mortimer Street.

Was it that he wanted courage to display himself before her in the light of a future near relation to an artist ?

"Oh ! if I thought that !" she mentally exclaimed, "if for a moment I could believe it, what a dismal wreck would all my best affections be !" And a few such thoughts did certainly in the course of that brilliant evening flash through her mind, with the sort of angry light which, while it lasts, shows objects only too distinctly.

But no such painful thoughts could detain her long from the enjoyment of moments made up of everything best calculated to occupy and delight her. The new-born hopes and happiness of Charles had inspired him with a degree of courageous brilliancy, which did not shrink, as heretofore, from the notice and admiration he excited. Mr. Carey asked him, *à propos* of a question which had been started upon the present state of taste and feeling for poetry in Italy, whether he thought that Dante still held his high supremacy among them ?

"Indeed I do !" replied Charles.

"Yet, what proofs do they give of it ?" said

Mr. Carey. "All that I have read, or heard of late, has rather led me to suspect that they have amused themselves more by getting up an *Inferno* upon earth, than either in soaring or diving in the spirit of the mighty Tuscan."

"You would not say that," said Charles, "could you have seen what I have seen—could you have heard what I have heard, Mr. Carey! I have more than once been present in a theatre in Italy when their great actor, Modena, has recited favourite passages of Dante to them. And could you have watched the people then—could you have seen, as I have done, the dark, yet glowing language of the eager eyes, the listening stillness of the speaking features, and felt how awful was the death-like silence of a crowd while listening to such words as were then breathed into their souls, you would not speak of them as of men that had been. *Non è spento. Non è spento.*"

There was a little approach to the listening stillness he had been describing during this burst, and even for a few seconds afterwards; for Charles was in earnest, and earnestness almost always claims attention.

Mr. Carey, however, knew that this must not last too long, or that the eager boy would have

reason to think that he had frightened them all by his vehemence. "Reciting Dante?" said Mr. Carey. "How was this managed, Worthington? Did the performer come forward dressed like a private gentleman, and mouth out the *Commedia*?"

"No, no; he was in character," replied Charles.

"In character, my dear fellow! In what character?"

The animal spirits of Charles were in a state of unusual excitement. He was feeling perfectly happy, and his mother was looking happy too,—looking as he had not seen her for years. This must be his excuse for the frolic that followed. Instead of replying to Mr. Carey, he addressed himself to that gentleman's clever and very animated young daughter; another whisper was addressed to Judith, and then the trio left the room together.

Their absence was not long; and when they returned, most of the party marvelled how it could have been so short, for the two young ladies, who returned first, and who contrived, after whispering a word or two to Mr. Carey, to clear a small space at the end of the room upon which the door opened, were presently

followed by a figure which those unpractised in such vagaries marvelled to see so suddenly *costumé*.

In a word, Charles entered, and by the help of the well-known head-dress, (admirably arranged by the two girls, who had not scrupled to ransack a box of artificial flowers for the needful leaves,) and by the help, also, of such draperies as the winter wardrobes of the family easily furnished, appeared before the company in the likeness of that immortal figure, which is pretty well familiar to all the world, and with a wonderfully clever imitation of Modena's voice and manner, recited the first solemnly mysterious lines of the *Inferno*.

The effect produced was considerably greater than the young mimic had anticipated, or intended. There were three or four persons present who had heard Modena speak these lines, and their testimony to the excellence of the imitation was unanimous.

But Mr. Carey would not let him cease there, and the imploring cries of "Go on! Go on!" which seconded his entreaties, tempted Charles to indulge both himself and them by reciting several of those well-known passages which are almost as familiar to an educated audience in England as in Italy.

The countenance, the majestic stature, the graceful form,—and above all, the firm yet flexible, the sonorous yet harmonious voice of Charles, altogether gave a power and a charm to this performance that was irresistible.

“And this is the man,” thought Judith, as she looked proudly at her cousin, “this is the man they are ashamed of! But no. Perhaps if they saw him thus,—perhaps if they hit upon the notable discovery that he had that in him which might rouse even the apathy of fashion into something like intellectual excitement,—perhaps *then* they might condescend to notice him! But rather than this should be—rather than he should be made use of, as a tool for their amusement, I would doom him to the oblivion of a hermit’s cell. And his mother and I would share it with him.”

Unhappy Judith! Alas! how that young heart was wrung, notwithstanding the manifold blessings that Providence had showered upon her! And now, in addition to all the rest, she had to endure the pang of remorse.

Notwithstanding all the blame which could not but attach to Frederic Dorking for his conduct towards Charles, (however much his mother’s influence might have occasioned it,) notwithstanding this, she did not doubt his

love towards herself ; nor did she, nor could she, for a moment forget that she had pledged her faith to him. And yet, unhappy girl ! she felt, through every fibre of her frame, that she was not made for Frederic, nor Frederic for her.

A feeling of terror not to be described seized upon her as she became conscious of the tendency of her own thoughts when they dictated the indignant words above cited. *She* share the hermitage of Charles Worthington ! *She* ! an affianced wife, and affianced to a man who loved her tenderly, and had proved his love !

If any of the excited and greatly delighted company had found leisure to look at her at that moment, they would have seen her as pale as death ; and well might she look pale, for a more miserable creature than Judith was at that moment could not easily have been found, —great part of that misery arising from the dreadful persuasion that she was very wicked.

The love of Frederic Dorking had been returned with all the glowing affection and gratitude of a very young creature, feeling, or fancying, that the obligation conferred was greater than could be repaid.

Nothing could well have been more modestly

humble than Judith's estimate of herself and her own consequence, when she first found herself, an unknown little stranger, in her new country ; and sensitive and impressionable as she was in a very high degree, the delightful soothing which the flattering kindness of Mrs. Chilbert, and the still more flattering devotion of Frederic Dorking, brought to her loving but then solitary heart, was irresistible.

Judith had some little vanity, too, as who has not ? And Mrs. Chilbert had made her very clearly comprehend that she had some reason to be vain of a preference, which could have been received with indifference by no one. And the beautiful, ardent child repaid it with her whole heart. At least she thought it was her whole heart, and she had told him so, with the same sincerity that she told it to Mrs. Chilbert and to herself.

But, alas ! most fearfully rapid had been of late the developement of faculties, which made her doubt whether indeed she loved him with her whole heart.

Was it not an infidelity ? was it not a sin, to be so keenly sensible of the superiority of her cousin Charles ? Where was the casuist who was to answer her ? Or rather, where was the human being to whom she could

apply for counsel and judgment as to what she ought to do? Yet, even in the painful moments when she was most near to confessing to herself that she loved Charles better than Frederic, even then she never for an instant fancied that Charles loved her. And never, in truth, had he given her the slightest reason to suspect it. Charles was seven long years older than Judith, and his character was much beyond his age in firmness. He had, from the first day of their acquaintance, looked upon Judith as a thing forbid; and his conduct, and his feelings too, had been exactly what they ought to have been under the circumstances.

What he thought of her beauty as an artist; of her talents as an amateur; or of her feelings and conduct as a philosopher, is another affair.

CHAPTER XIX.

NOTHING could exceed the punctuality with which the Lady Augusta Trevors kept her appointment with the young artist, and Judith was equally punctual in meeting her ; for not only had she promised to be so, but her cousin Charles had told her, very honestly, that he thought she might be useful to him.

Her ladyship, at her first sitting, did not come in the covenanted *white satin and black lace*, for Charles had told her that it was not necessary. The chief business of this first sitting was the final arrangement of the attitude, and an outline sketch in chalk, to determine the place of the features upon the canvass.

“ Shall I be too troublesome,” said Charles, “ if I request your ladyship to give me a daily sitting ? When I am interested in a work, I

get on with it very rapidly, and any unnecessary interval would, I think, be injurious."

"I flatter myself, Mr. Worthington, that nothing will occur to prevent my coming to you daily," she replied. "Must I be dressed to-morrow?"

"I should wish to see you to-morrow precisely as you would desire the finished portrait to appear," said he.

"Very well, sir; it shall be so," she replied. "And now, then, I may go?" she added.

Charles made a ceremonious bow, in token of her having permission to depart, and then prepared to open the door for her. "But not," she exclaimed, in an accent of pretty playfulness, "not till I have your cousin's promise to meet me here daily. Daily, my dear! Remember, daily! I know that I could not sit patiently for five minutes without you."

Charles scarcely knew what to make of the pertinacity with which this condition was enforced; nor did he feel quite sure that Judith might approve it. He therefore replied, rather stiffly, "Your ladyship's influence on Miss Maitland is, I doubt not, very powerful, and I must beg you to settle the arrange-

ment with her. All I can say on the subject is, that her presence will be no impediment to my work."

"And that assurance will be enough for my kind friend, will it not?" said Lady Augusta, very coaxingly.

"If it is thought that I can really be of any use in the business, I will certainly be punctual in attendance," replied Judith, gravely.

"But you are of use! You will be of the greatest use!" exclaimed the beautiful Lady Augusta, arranging her bonnet at the glass; "for the fact is, I shall not feel happy without you."

Judith forced a smile, and bowed her acquiescence; whereupon, her ladyship very condescendingly kissed the tips of her fingers at her, and departed.

I have no time left to enter very much into detail, but there was a doubting sort of smile exchanged among the trio that were left in occupation of Charles's painting-room. They all three doubted the sincerity of the beautiful young lady who had left them. Judith only felt sure that she was very silly, Charles that she was very affected, and Mrs. Worthington that she was any thing but true. In short,

they were all aware that they had no single feeling in common with her.

"She is not one of us!" said Charles; "but I shall not make the worse portrait of her for that. You shall see."

The work, indeed, on which they all seemed to think so much depended, went on admirably. At the conclusion of the third sitting the likeness, both of feature and attitude, became so striking, that Charles himself smiled as he looked at it; his mother made him a low bow, for she had been requested by her son not to leave the room till she had given her opinion upon the position of the delicate white hand; and Judith, too much elated to persevere in the reserve she had assumed, said, with considerable animation, "I think it would be very desirable, Lady Augusta, that some of your family or friends should see the picture before any thing like finishing is set about. If they think the resemblance as perfect as I do, Mr. Worthington must be requested to make no alteration whatever."

"Thank you a thousand times for that suggestion, my charming Miss Maitland!" exclaimed Lady Augusta, very joyously. "It is exactly what I was wishing for, myself. But I would not venture to make the proposal till

Mr. Worthington himself expressed a wish that it should be seen."

"I shall be much pleased to hear the judgment of your family, or of any intimate friend upon the likeness, before I go any farther," said Charles.

"Exactly what Miss Maitland suggested," said Lady Augusta. "What perfectly kindred spirits yours are!" she added, looking from one to the other, with an affected air of sentimental interest.

Charles coloured slightly, and bowed as if he had received a compliment; but poor Judith became as red as scarlet. It was to her a compliment that could not be listened to with indifference. Lady Augusta gave her one glance of hawk-like keenness, and to her waiting-gentleman the signal for departure; and then muttering a few words to Charles, signifying that she should come to him with some friends on the morrow, she took her leave.

Charles seemed to have forgotten her the moment she had left the room, but gazed with a great deal more interest at the admirable *ébauche* of her which he had thrown upon his convass, than she was ever likely to inspire in him herself.

Not so the two ladies. They had paid

much more attention to her, taking her soul and body together, than he had, for he had really forgotten that she had any thing save a very handsome person in her composition. The soul did not seem to have been conspicuous.

"How do you like her, aunt Worthington?" said Judith in a half-whisper, as if unwilling to disturb the artistic meditations of Charles.

"Judith! I cannot imagine why it is that I *dislike* her so much," replied Mrs. Worthington.

"I think I could tell you, aunt Penelope," said Judith, in a still lower whisper. "There is no truth in her,—and you feel it!"

Meanwhile this harshly-judged lady repaired immediately to Berkeley Square, and very completely proved that Judith had taken but a one-sided view of her character, by the very near approach to frankness with which she addressed her friend and ally, Mrs. Dorking.

"My dear, dear friend!" she began. "I am so glad to find you! My heart is bursting, my dearest Mrs. Dorking! For myself, I know it is my duty to give up all hope,—I have none! Alas! no, I have none! But not for that reason can I be indifferent to the destiny of your son,—to the destiny of the only man that

I ever did, or ever can love. And that destiny, Mrs. Dorking, unless some influence interferes to prevent it, that destiny will be terrible!"

"My dearest Lady Augusta! My sweet, lovely girl!—oh! let me say, my beloved child! Do not, I beseech you, for pity's sake, for that gentle pity's sake which must be a part of your sweet, loving nature,—do not tell me to despair! My dearest love! my life hangs on the issue of this horrible affair. What is it you will tell me of? Some new proof of my unhappy son's besotted madness?"

"No, my beloved, my dearest friend, no!" replied the agitated Lady Augusta. "It is not *that*. I have not seen your son. I half hinted to him last night, that I expected to see him among his friends in Mortimer Street. He coloured, but said nothing, and I have never seen him there. No, no, it is not *that*. What makes my heart ache now, is the deep conviction which I feel that the girl loves him not. Mrs. Dorking! when a woman loves, trust me her eyes are marvellously opened to the perception of the same feeling in another. That girl, that *Judith* does *not* love your son,—she loves her cousin. She loves the handsome

low-born youth who is now struggling to maintain himself by his labour, but who will end by being maintained by her, whether she be his wife or not."

Mrs. Dorking was rather more than willing to believe any thing which might tend to separate her son from a girl, whose alliance could, in her opinion, bring nothing with it to counterbalance the evil of her low connexions, and who, moreover, had mortally offended her by displaying a will, restive and disobedient to her own.

Yet, nevertheless, she did not, she could not credit the statement of the enamoured Lady Augusta. She really and truly did not believe it possible that any female heart that ever beat, (unless insanity had something to do with it,) could prefer a vulgar painter, labouring in a garret, (these were the terms her meditating soul suggested to her,) to such a being as Frederic Dorking !

But this conviction by no means led her to think that the duty of saving this son, if possible, from such an alliance was the less imperative upon her ; and if this new fancy of Lady Augusta could in any way assist in achieving this, it was not to be rejected merely because it was improbable.

She therefore uttered no discouraging sound to check her young friend's confidence, but fixing her eyes upon her with an expression of more interest and hope than she really felt, only pronounced the words "Go on!"

And her ladyship did go on, so ably stating facts, or at least inferences, very skilfully drawn from all she had seen and all she had heard, coloured a little, of course, by the tincture of her own wishes, but on the whole giving an air so much like the fidelity of truth to her narrative, that Mrs. Dorking was staggered in her belief of its impossibility.

"If you are right, my sweet girl; if this obscure Indian girl indeed prefers a relative of her own class and rank to the infatuated young man who turned aside from his own to notice her!—if this be true! the task before me is then easy, for I shall be assisted in it by every feeling and every duty that ought to influence the actions of a woman in my position."

"That your duty is plain, my dearest friend, there certainly can be no doubt," was the reply; "and nothing, I now think, can prevent the task being easy, but some blundering in our manner of performing it. I have not told you yet, dear Mrs. Dorking, but I

see no reason why I should conceal it from you,—I have not told you yet, that when I first met Frederic after my return to London, I thought he greeted me with considerable agitation in his manner ; and at the ball, your charming ball I mean, he took, I thought, almost as much notice of me as he did of her. And I am quite sure that he thought I was not altered for the worse in my appearance. I tell you this, that you may not think I am madly listening to the dictates of my own heart without paying any attention to his. I lost him once, I know I did, by fancying there was more indifference on his part than on my own ; but I have suffered too much to permit my committing the same folly again.”

“Thank Heaven for that!” replied Mrs. Dorking, with great sincerity, much comforted and encouraged by finding that whatever difficulties her favourite project might have to encounter on the part of her son, there would be none to fear on that of the lady. And then she gave a description, which was not altogether untrue though very greatly exaggerated, of the disappointment suffered by Frederic upon discovering that he had deceived himself when he believed that he had made some progress in her favour, adding, “Had

you never made your cruel flight to Paris, my lovely child, my heart would never have been tortured as it has been by what followed it!"

Having thus mutually established the most entire confidence between themselves, the two ladies proceeded to the arrangement of many things upon which they founded their hopes of being able to convince the poor, deluded Frederic, that Judith Maitland was not the woman best calculated to make him happy as a wife.

And certainly it was very possible that they were right. At any rate they were very sincerely in earnest; and before they parted, it was determined between them that so very brilliant and overpowering a party of the highest rank and fashion should visit poor Charles Worthington's painting-room on the morrow, for the ostensible purpose of passing judgment upon Lady Augusta's portrait, as might place in a sufficiently obvious point of view the tremendous chasm which divided people of fashion from people of talent,—Mrs. Dorking undertaking, on her side, that both her son and herself would make a part of the distinguished company who were thus to honour the abode of the poor painter.

CHAPTER XX.

CERTAINLY it was not without surprise, and certainly it was not without vexation, that Frederic Dorking listened to his mother's proposal of meeting Lady Augusta Trevors at "the painter's," in order to give their opinion of the portrait for which, at his request, she was sitting, before it proceeded any further.

Had the painter been any other than Charles Worthington, the cousin-german of his affianced bride, he would certainly have seen nothing either extraordinary or disagreeable in the proposal; but having never forgotten the terrible aspect of his mother when he first made her acquainted with the disagreeable fact of this relationship, it now appeared to him to be both.

Frederic Dorking was perfectly well aware of his own complete independence ; and it was this which had given him the courage, as well as the power, of persevering in his purpose of marrying his beautiful Judith after he had himself been made acquainted with the station and the proximity of these unexpected relations. But the discovery, though it had not cured his passion for Judith, was very far from being agreeable to him.

As far as wishing to be very liberal in assisting them, Judith herself, could she have read his very inmost heart, must have been satisfied ; but she had never yet judged him quite as severely as she might have done as to his inclination,—nay, more, his firm determination, to have as little to do with them in the way of personal intercourse as possible.

Nevertheless, he really admired Charles, and felt that, whenever accident threw them together, he should never feel any repugnance to treating him with familiarity and kindness ; nay, he contemplated doing great things for him in the way of patronage, and he even thought it possible that if, in future years, the young man should achieve greatness, (for he

knew such things had happened,) he might be induced to go still further.

But, for the present, he really and truly thought it was his duty to "hold off," for so only could he hope to maintain any thing like harmony with his own family.

This plan had hitherto seemed to answer very well, for Judith had never hinted to him any feeling approaching to disapproval of his conduct. His father he believed to be still totally ignorant that any such obnoxious people as the Worthingtons existed; and as to his mother, he persuaded himself that she was satisfied with the degree of discretion he had displayed, and had come to the wise determination of never again alluding to the subject.

But all this well-looking and convenient fabric was completely overthrown by his mother's unexpected proposal of going herself, and making him go also, to Mortimer Street.

It positively occurred to him for one moment, that it was possible she might have forgotten, in the fervour of her renewed intimacy with her charming young friend Lady Augusta, that the artist who was painting her picture was the same individual, whose threatened connexion with herself had once appeared to affect her like a thunderbolt.

But this idea was effectually removed upon her saying, with considerable bitterness of tone, "Of course, Frederic, *you* can have no objection to this visit, whatever I may feel."

In fact, to object to it was, he felt, impossible, and he promised that he would be ready to attend her.

On reaching the residence of Lady Augusta, who had requested Mrs. Dorking to let her have a place in her carriage, they found the equipages of her father the Earl of Somerstown, and two others belonging to dear friends of her ladyship, in waiting.

Mrs. Dorking did not get out, but Frederic ran up stairs to announce the arrival of his mother, and to escort the young lady to the carriage.

Much to his surprise, and almost to his dismay, he found Lord Somerstown himself, and his son and heir Lord Worley, in waiting to accompany them.

Now the only mental quality for which the Earl of Somerstown had ever been distinguished was pride,—hard, stiff, stubborn, stupid, unbending pride; whereas his son and heir was as notoriously distinguished for excess of puppyism, holding himself to be the mirror of fashion, and one by which every man must

dress himself, or fail in obtaining anything like a favourable place in fashionable society. He was, moreover, as insolent as vain. And if the unfortunate Frederic had been asked to name the two individuals before whom he would the most reluctantly have met his affianced wife in the presence of her artist cousin, he could not have failed to name Lord Somerstown and Lord Worley.

Moreover, the drawing-room into which he was ushered contained four exquisitely elegant ladies of fashion, with whom he had the honour and happiness of being acquainted, besides the beautiful Lady Augusta herself.

And at that moment she certainly was “beautiful exceedingly”—for with coquetry not very difficult to understand, she had on this occasion assumed, for the first time, the very beautiful and particularly becoming dress in which it had been arranged that she should be painted.

Judith had been well inspired when she alluded to the style of Vandyke as the model upon which a portrait of Lady Augusta Trevors should be taken. It would be difficult to imagine a face and figure more admirably calculated to suit it. Tall, and very elegantly formed ; fair, yet not so fair as to deprive her

of the advantage of rather dark hair; eyes large and long; nose straight; mouth small; and ringlets of the most finished corkscrew style, proclaimed her a Vandyke ready made by nature expressly to be transferred to canvass. And when to this is added a very little foot, and a very delicate hand, it may easily be imagined that a perfectly well-arranged dress of white satin and black lace would complete altogether a very lovely picture.

But Frederic Dorking was too much annoyed by the consciousness of all that was to follow, to have any feelings very wide awake except those of mortification. His heart sunk, poor young man, at the idea of what was to follow! However, he was himself too essentially a man of fashion to be quite thrown out. Having paid his compliments to his dear, elegant friends—and all the persons there *were* his dear, elegant friends, he offered his arm, looking very handsome, too, as he did so, to the Lady Augusta, and led her immediately to his mother's carriage.

Upon this occasion it was a carriage *à quatre*, and Frederic had the gratification of sitting opposite to the beautiful Vandyke. And she really was so beautiful, that for a

moment he actually forgot all his troubles, and told her so.

The feet of the two ladies came in contact, and the white satin shoe of Lady Augusta was pressed upon by the black satin boot of Mrs. Dorking.

To Frederic's compliment her ladyship returned a look, in which a smile and frown seemed mingled ; and she blushed, too, for *she*, at least, was very much in earnest,—she blushed beautifully. And the dress, and the blush, and the smile, and the frown altogether produced their effect, for he certainly felt very perfectly aware that she was exceedingly lovely.

The carriage of Mrs. Dorking was in the van ; and when that stopped at No. **, Mortimer Street, the three carriages which were following it stopped too. And then Frederic in one instant was converted from a well-pleased man of fashion, admiring a particularly beautiful woman of fashion, sitting face to face with him, and seeming to have no great objection to the being so admired,—in one single instant he was changed from this into an ill-at-ease *promesso sposo*, who was bound to forget all the beauty in the world except that of the very dear little creature who at that

moment he felt ashamed should be seen by any body but himself.

In short, he was quite aware that, somehow or other, he had got into a very particularly awkward predicament, and gladly would he have run away from it had it been possible. But it was not possible ; and he felt himself doomed to usher, not only Lady Augusta Trevors and his mother, but the half-dozen other fine folks who followed them, up two pair of stairs to the very convenient painting-room of Charles Worthington !

The party found the young artist in his artist's dress, which was a brown-holland blouse, with a black leather belt round his waist. Poor Judith, of course, was there also, for in fact she was there upon compulsion ; and her aunt Worthington was there of course also, for Judith could not have been there alone.

If the very particular awkwardness of the position in which Mr. Frederic Dorking now found himself be not evident, the Lady Augusta Trevors had meditated, planned, and plotted in vain. At any rate it was evident to himself ; and any thing more unlike what it ought to have been than his manner of paying his compliments to Judith, to her

cousin, and to her aunt, cannot well be imagined.

Judith, with all her own individual feelings for the moment forgotten, seemed only conscious that the present now was a period of great importance to the professional advancement of her cousin Charles. She did not happen to know by sight any of the magnates there assembled, either male or female, save the two ladies who were engaged in playing such strange tricks with her destiny, and the greatly discomposed gentleman to whom her faith was pledged. But she was an acute and quick-eyed little personage, and very speedily became aware, even before any astounding titles had reached her ear, that they were of the rank and station likely to have influence.

Perhaps there was not one of the set (her lover excepted) who, if they could have read the very inmost page of her heart, would not have classed her as a thoroughly low-minded, profit-seeking young creature, whom accident had thrown among them, but whose proper place in creation was decidedly among the productive classes, whose destiny it is to minister to the wants and the wishes of their superiors.

And it might, in truth, have required a more searching, and more speculative eye than is usually bestowed upon us, purblind mortals as we are, to have discerned all the nobleness that was hid under the innocent young look and quiet exterior of Judith. That she was beautiful, was a point already agreed upon and settled among all the *lorgnettes* of London for the season ; but the retiring, unpresuming air with which she now seemed to class herself much more distinctly as Charles Worthington's born cousin than as Frederic Dorking's future wife, produced an effect upon the whole party, concerning which she was both unconscious and indifferent.

Lady Augusta looked, and felt, as if already in possession of all that she most wished for on earth. Radiant in conscious beauty, and more radiant still, if possible, in conscious elegance, in conscious fashion, could she look at Judith's business-like anxiety concerning the position and management of light upon her picture with any of the soul-subduing terrors of jealousy ?

It was absolutely impossible ; absolutely out of the question ! She watched the uncomfortable countenance of Frederic ; she saw his eye rest for a moment upon the tranquilly-

moving and perfectly self-possessed Judith, and then saw it turn with a look of feverish annoyance on his mother, and then felt that it rested upon herself.

“ Will he ever bring himself to marry her after this ? ” was the thrilling question that she asked herself. And the answer that her heart, and her judgment, and her experience whispered to her in return, was of a nature to bring a still lovelier bloom to her cheek, a brighter sparkle to her eye, and a sweeter smile to her lips.

It was indeed a moment of triumph. She saw herself in the large *cheval* mirror as beautiful as an angel, and what she felt perhaps, at that moment, to be more important still, she saw herself the very perfection of elegance and dignity of aspect ; and she saw also that Frederic Dorking was fixedly looking at her.

From this contemplation she turned, almost unconsciously, a furtive glance upon Judith ; and though she had before certainly thought her exceedingly lovely, she now became convinced that whatever beauty she had was the beauty of a *grisette*, and that she was no more fit to be the wife of the exquisitely elegant Frederic Dorking, than she herself was to

be the wife of Charles Worthington, the painter.

The eyes of the whole company were of course speedily directed towards the portrait, and the judgment passed upon the resemblance already obtained was perfectly uniform, and equally satisfactory to the artist and his model.

But neither Lady Augusta, nor her devoted friend Mrs. Dorking, had any intention that the scene should end here.

It was arranged that Lady Augusta was to be left to give the artist a sitting ; but, by a multitude of clever little devices, she contrived that her fine friends should not leave her immediately. She had various consultations to hold, various opinions to ask, respecting the position of a hand, or the position of a foot, or whether a ring should be worn, or not worn, and whether a glove should be held, or not held.

In short, there was no great difficulty in prolonging a scene that was full of gratification in a thousand ways to her, and, as she hoped, full of mortification, and of fatal mischief too, to the unconscious girl whom she hoped to crush, to rival, and to supplant.

She saw, indeed, that the man she so passionately loved was suffering acutely; but she could not afford to spare him that; and as she glanced at his flushed cheek and embarrassed eye she satisfied her heart, and her conscience too, by the reflection, that for every second of mortification she was inflicting upon him now, she might spare him a long life of mortification ten thousand times deeper still.

Meanwhile, the deeply-interested Mrs. Dorking was not idle. She had cleverly taken care to make Judith understand, and Frederic also, that she had been much offended by the conduct of Miss Maitland at her pic-nic breakfast on the Thames, and, whether reasonably or not, it mattered little, this sufficed to explain her altered manner to her.

Judith had borne this altered manner very patiently, for which, indeed, but little credit was due to her; for it had, in truth, proved to her a source of inexpressible relief, the truthfulness of her character having often made her suitable reception of Mrs. Dorking's flattering cajoleries, during the former part of their acquaintance, inexpressibly painful to her.

On the present occasion, however, nothing that related merely to herself was either felt or cared for. The circumstance of her appear-

ing to the eyes of Frederic, his mother, and the fine train of friends by whom they were accompanied, in the subordinate station of an artist's near relative instead of that of a beauty and an heiress, was as completely unthought of by her at that moment, as the occupation at the time-being of the Grand Turk.

She believed that she herself was going to be married; she believed that her own destiny, in this respect, was fixed and certain: and this being so, she knew that she could not reasonably hope to share her fortune with her dearly-beloved aunt Penelope. No thought of how well she might have liked to share it with her son made any part of her meditations. The very strongest and most earnest efforts of her mind were constantly in action to save her from the approach of any such thoughts. Nor were these efforts vain. She really thought of no such thing.

She thought of the immense importance that the success of her cousin Charles, as an artist, would be, both to himself and his mother, and all her care, all her attention,—in truth, her whole heart and soul, were, during these very important moments, fixed on that, and that alone.

And while these important moments lasted, while she perceived every eye fixed in critical scrutiny on the canvass, and heard every voice declare that the work upon it, as far as it was advanced, was admirable,—as long as this lasted, it would have been scarcely in the power of any one present to have diverted her attention from the subject.

But when this was over, when the conclave round the canvass broke up, which was not the case till Lord Somerstown, in a paroxysm of satisfaction at seeing his beautiful daughter so admirably pourtrayed, had formally announced to Mr. Worthington that he too should choose to have his portrait taken at full length, and as a pendant to that of his daughter,—when this was settled, and the attention of the party was turned from the portrait to the beautiful original—then, indeed, there were some features in the scene that was going on which became too strongly marked and obvious to escape her observation any longer.

Frederic had shaken hands with her when he entered the room, but had not looked at her since ; this she could have borne without a particle of anger, and, in truth, without seeing a particle of offence in it, for she fully believed that he was pursuing the good work

he had begun, in procuring sitters for Charles among the friends he had brought with him.

But she did not, for she could not, long fail to perceive that he exchanged not a single word with Charles himself ; and what wounded her more deeply still, that he had taken no notice whatever of Mrs. Worthington, though he had met her more than once at the house of her aunt Elfreda.

She felt her colour rise, and her heart beat, as the continuance of this neglect became more and more obvious, till at length she too looked as much embarrassed, and as ill at ease, as the offending Frederic himself.

The rather remarkable circumstance of her not having been herself presented, either to the father of Lady Augusta, or to either of the ladies who had accompanied her, was certainly not unobserved ; but it did not irritate her, as it did her cousin, nor wound her, as it did her aunt ; for, in fact, her mind was not sufficiently at leisure to dwell upon it. But when she saw Charles, after looking for a moment at his mother, who was standing very conspicuously alone, and apart from the brilliant set who were chattering and laughing with very unrestrained gaiety around Mrs. Dorking,—when she saw him, with the most marked and

conspicuous attention, take a chair across the room, and stand beside her till she had placed herself in it, her emotion (mixed up of various feelings) betrayed itself, to her inexpressible mortification, by filling her eyes with tears.

But the tears did not fall ; there was a sort of burning indignation at her heart which seemed to dry them at their source, and she flattered herself that they were unseen.

But in this she was mistaken ; both Mrs. Dorking and Lady Augusta were aware of her emotion, and both attributed it to the marked want of attention in Frederic. In this interpretation they were both right, and both wrong ; right in believing that it was occasioned by the manner of Frederic, but wrong in fancying that it was his want of attention to herself.

She could have forgiven him that ; she might even have forgiven his cold, dry manner to Charles, and the very obvious care he took to keep as distant from him as possible ; but she could not easily forgive the positive rudeness with which he avoided Mrs. Worthington, whom he affected not to recognise, and who in truth appeared, from their manner, to be invisible to himself, and to the whole party who entered with him.

After the very lively laughing talk above mentioned had continued for some time longer, Mrs. Worthington's chair being at the greatest possible distance from it, while her niece and her son were stationed on each side of her,— after this had continued long enough to render its impertinence sufficiently conspicuous to be offensive, Lady Augusta addressed her brother, Lord Worley, in a tone quite loud enough to be heard by the artist,—

"My dear Worley," said she, "you have made me laugh till I have no strength left. It would be absolutely impossible for me to sit to-day! You know you are irresistible; so go, there's a darling brother, and make my excuses receivable, if not acceptable, to Mr. Worthington, and his cousin Miss Judith also. I must positively be disengaged of this dress, and then get some air in the Park, or I shall very decidedly expire."

Charles paused for a moment in doubt whether he should step forward to meet this apology, or remain where he was, to receive it. The puppy peerling allowed him no time to meditate, for, stepping rapidly forward, and bowing to Judith, as if his embassy was expressly to her, he said, with his bold eyes audaciously fixed on her face, "Fair lady!

will you plead my fainting sister's cause to your cousin? Will you have the immense kindness to make him comprehend that her sitting to-day is impossible?"

The imperturbability of countenance with which Judith received this address, of which she did not appear to hear a single word, being engaged in arranging the shawl of Mrs. Worthington, did her credit as an actress. And her cousin seconded her intention of bestowing neither look nor word upon the messenger by looking him very full in the face himself, and saying, "Oh! certainly."

And having said this to her brother, he approached the fair lady herself, very politely assuring her that the alteration would be in no way inconvenient to him.

"That is charming!" returned her ladyship; and immediately passing her arm through that of Frederic, who having led her in, was, of course, in duty bound to lead her out, she approached the door, talking to him very rapidly as she moved on, and stood waiting beside it till her father had led out one countess who was of the party, and her brother another; and then she followed without turning her head, or having in any way

paid her parting compliments to "the painter and his family."

The staircase of this Mortimer Street house was fortunately rather a narrow one—so narrow, indeed, as to make it easily appear that it more civil to get out of the way of a lady, than attempt to hand her down it; and of this Frederic Dorking so skilfully took advantage, that he ran back to the painting-room almost before he was missed, and stretching out his hand to Judith, while still at several feet distance from her, said, in very hurried accents, "Good morning, Judith! Shall I see you to-night? Does my mother take you to Lady Hartwell's?"

Judith stretched out her hand in return, and the two hands met, and were joined together as they had often been before. But there was something new in the accent with which Judith said, "Your mother? No, Frederic; I do not think your mother is going to take me any where."

CHAPTER XXI.

No sooner had the affianced lover of Judith left the room, and shut the door behind him, which, under the circumstances, was a degree of politeness which Mrs. Worthington scarcely expected,—no sooner was this done, than Judith dropped on her knees before her aunt, earnestly exclaiming, “Oh, aunt Worthington! aunt Worthington! Do you think he loves me?”

Mrs. Worthington, completely misunderstanding the meaning and nature of her appeal, and deeply shocked at what she believed to be the agonizing doubts of her unfortunate niece as to the affection of the man she loved, and who had just given so much cause for doubt on the subject—poor Mrs. Worthington positively trembled with emotion

as she pressed her lips upon the forehead of the kneeling girl, and replied, "Love you, my Judith? How can we permit ourselves to doubt it! After all that has passed, my sweet child, how is it possible for us to doubt it?"

"And yet, aunt, I do assure you that his manner is not at all like what it used to be,—I do assure you it is not!"

Mrs. Worthington was quite as thoroughly convinced of this as it was possible for Judith to be; but far, oh! very far was she from imagining that all Judith's earthly hopes hung upon the reality of this change. On the contrary, her pitying aunt, who watched her anxious eye and changing colour with the deepest pity, thought that, at the present moment at least, it would be best and safest to feed her with the belief that Frederic Dorking's love was unchanged and unchangeable.

Poor child! It was very like feeding her with poison. She only needed to believe *undoubtedly* that Frederic Dorking did indeed love her as he had done, when her own young heart so fearlessly gave its own love in exchange,—she had only to believe *that* fully and undoubtedly, in order to make her lay her

head upon her pillow, and pray to God that she never might raise it up again.

The vehement distaste, the profound contempt, the strong moral abhorrence which had been inspired in her heart and soul by the manner in which Frederic and his hateful *clique* had treated her aunt Worthington and her cousin Charles, had made her positively shudder at the idea of becoming *his wife*,—at the idea of being for ever and for ever mixed up with *them*!

And yet, if indeed he loved her still, if he felt, or fancied, that his happiness depended on the promise she had plighted to him, how could she ever dare to rescind it?

She looked up into the face of her aunt, as she uttered what she *hoped* might prove true, with an expression of such profound melancholy, such deep suffering, that Mrs. Worthington knew not what to make of her.

For a moment the true state of the case flashed across her mind as possible; but she had her own reasons, not only for wishing not to make any mistake on the subject, but also for not wishing Judith to utter any thing in the heat of wounded feeling and proud resentment, which might not prove, upon longer trial, to be the final decision of her heart.

"Do not thus agitate yourself, my dear girl," said she. "Get up, my Judith. Let us say no more about any of these fine folks at present. Your carriage is waiting for you, dearest: go home at once, and compose yourself. If, upon reflection, you wish to talk to me further, I will be ready to receive you in my own room to-morrow."

Judith, who was trembling in every joint, felt the kindness and the wisdom of this.

"I will, I will," she replied. "I will do both, aunt Penelope. I will go now, and I will come to your own room immediately after breakfast to-morrow."

Mrs. Worthington waited for her arrival with impatience, but waited not long. Aunt Penelope's own room door was shut upon the aunt and niece; and before it was opened again, about one-half of the secrets of poor Judith's heart were disclosed to her.

Judith did not tell her that she had learned to know the difference between a man of genius and a man of fashion; but she did tell her that she had found it quite impossible any longer to disguise from herself the fact, that she could never be happy amongst a set of people whose feelings, principles, and opinions were at utter variance with her own.

"If I believed," she continued, "if I believed, aunt Penelope, that Frederic Dorking's happiness would be destroyed by my refusing to marry him, I should think it my duty to keep my promise, however much I might myself suffer by doing so. And if it were to end so,—if it were to end by my becoming his wife, I do think, and believe, that it would not be my own fault if I did not do my duty. But even while I say this, and while I mean it too, from the very bottom of my heart, I feel a frightful sort of consciousness that I should often be at a loss to know in what that duty consisted. Advise me, dearest aunt! Tell me what you think I ought to do."

This was an appeal which Mrs. Worthington felt it difficult, or, at least, disagreeable to answer, because her own wishes were so very strongly in favour of Judith's giving up a connexion which, probably, every other friend she had in the world would consider as in every way most desirable. But it would have been more difficult still had she not, as an uninterrupted witness of the scene which had passed on the preceding day, become strongly persuaded that the fidelity of the young man himself was shaken. And it would assuredly have been greatly more disagreeable, had not

her knowledge of her single-minded and most truthful Judith been sufficient to convince her that the spell, whatever had formed it, which had bound her to Frederic Dorking was broken ; and that the greatest kindness she could now do her, would be the setting her heart at rest respecting the possibility of breaking off the connexion, without really compromising the happiness of the young man.

After meditating for a minute or two, therefore, upon the most righteous course that she could herself pursue, she replied, " Judith, it would have been difficult for me to have found courage to tell you that I do think Mr. Dorking's manner is changed and therefore that I presume that his feelings are changed also. It would have been difficult, my dearest child, to have confessed this to you, had you not very completely convinced me that your own feelings are changed too. At your age, dear love, this cannot be deemed very extraordinary. You knew not what you felt ; you knew not what you were promising. And even in the case of Mr. Dorking, though many years your senior, Judith, I can comprehend, if I cannot quite excuse, the change which we have remarked in him. He saw you in what, speaking comparatively, was a retired country

neighbourhood, where you were not only unrivalled, my pretty Judith, in personal attractions, but where there was neither the overpowering influence of rank and fashion to attract his dazzled eyes elsewhere, nor any Mrs. Dorking at his side to point out their superiority, if there had been any. But here the case is different. Nor can I be insensible, my dear child, to the disadvantage which our being here is likely to prove to your position among persons of high rank and station."

Judith winced under this, and her smooth brow was painfully contracted, but she did not speak.

"I will not dwell upon this part of the subject, dearest," resumed Mrs. Worthington, for you love us well enough to make it painful. But there is truth in it, nevertheless."

"Then dwell upon it, aunt Worthington!" cried Judith, earnestly. "Only teach me to believe this possible, and enable me to satisfy myself that it is true, and all my misery will be over. Think you that I could feel any scruple at withdrawing from a union with a man, who wished that union less earnestly on account of my relationship with you? You must feel yourself that such a union could never make me happy."

"I do feel it, my dear, noble-minded child!" replied her aunt, with deep emotion.

"And I feel also," rejoined Judith, "that such a union could not be holy. There could be no truth in it. For ever, and for ever, it must be full of pretence and hollowness!"

Mrs. Worthington was again silent for some minutes. She felt all the truth of what Judith had said; but she felt, too, the terrible responsibility of uttering any thing that might influence her in giving up so very splendid a connexion. Judith sat with her eyes anxiously fixed upon her silent aunt, and then, finding the silence continue longer than she could patiently bear it, she sprung up, threw her arms round Mrs. Worthington's neck, embraced her closely, and then said,—"Farewell, my beloved aunt Penelope! I never will ask you again to say a single syllable on this subject. I think I understand your thoughts, and that shall suffice me. You are engaged to dine with us to-morrow, you know. Till then, adieu!" And with these words she departed.

When this scene was over, Judith felt that she had great need to be alone; and very thankful was she to find, upon returning to Green Street, that her aunt was gone to a lecture in Albemarle Street. Nevertheless,

the retirement of the unoccupied drawing-room did not seem sufficiently profound and secure, and it was therefore in her own little room that she shut herself, locking the door to secure herself from all possible interruption. And truly she had enough to think of; and it would have been well for her had that been all, for her thoughts, for the most part, were very far from being disagreeable; but she soon remembered that she had something besides thinking to occupy her,—she remembered that she had a great deal to do. There was much that was very awful in the business before her, and it required a firm purpose and a resolute spirit to perform it; but these requisites were not wanting. The first thing needful was, that she should address herself with all sincerity to Frederic Dorking himself, and inform him that she had changed her mind upon the important subject of becoming his wife.

That was her first task, and it would have been more painful and more difficult than it was, had not the impression of his conduct and manner towards her cousin and her aunt been still fresh in her mind, bringing a strong conviction to her heart that, however genuine his feelings of affection for her might have

been at Westhampton, they had not been able to withstand the action of the counteracting feelings to which he had been subjected under the influence of his mother, and of the very air and climate which he seemed to breathe in London.

This conviction robbed her task of all its real bitterness, for she felt that the communication she was about to make would bring more of relief than sorrow with it; and she therefore sat down with a steady heart, and not a very unsteady hand, to write the following letter.

CHAPTER XXII.

From Judith Maitland to Frederic Dorking.

"I cannot think that the contents of this letter will surprise you much ; and still less can I believe that they will greatly pain you. We have both, I am afraid, something for which we may blame each other ; but also I am quite sure that there is much for which we both must blame ourselves. Before you have read thus far, you will have guessed that I am writing to tell you that the engagement between us must be broken off ; and if you feel as strongly as I think you do, that it will be better for us both that it should be so, you will have the generosity to confess it, and not to reproach me. Were it necessary for me to enter into what I believe to be your feelings, or into what I know to be my own, I could

make it very evident to any body, and every body, that we should not act wisely, nor conscientiously, by adhering to an engagement very rashly made, and which nothing but false delicacy could make us fear to break. Do not think it necessary to answer this letter; the doing so may be painful to you, and could not possibly make any alteration in the relation in which for the future we shall stand to each other. I feel convinced, without your telling me so, that I possess your good wishes; and let me beg you to accept the assurance of mine.

"JUDITH MAITLAND."



It would have been a great comfort to Judith, could she have shown this important epistle to her aunt Worthington, and received from her an approving judgment upon it. But a feeling of delicacy forbade her showing it to her at all. In the first place, she did not wish that she should be compromised at all in the transaction; and in the next, she wished not to force upon her any farther the conviction that it was written in consequence

of Mr. Dorking's behaviour to herself and Charles, which was the conclusion to which she both hoped and expected that Mr. Frederic Dorking would arrive himself, and which she felt pretty certain her aunt could not miss, if it were submitted to her.

Judith, therefore, unlocked her door, and rang her bell ; for she certainly felt no inclination to submit the document to her aunt Elfreda,—smiling a little, as the idea occurred to her, that her letter was as likely to be intercepted by this aunt, as Mr. Dorking's first epistle by the other.

The footman was summoned, and the letter sent, with particularly implicit instructions that he was *not* to wait for an answer. And then Judith sat herself down in the very strongest frame of mind imaginable, her heart beating and her temples throbbing at the hardihood of the deed she had done, and yet with a lightness of spirit and a feeling of contentment that she had not enjoyed for many weeks.

The feelings of Mr. Frederic Dorking, on reading this letter, were of a very mixed nature. His first thought was, that he had deserved it. The second, that Judith had acted like an angel, and that he would never give her up. The third fell back upon all the

enormous difficulties which he knew the Worthington connexion would bring upon him ; and the fourth dictated the dutiful resolution that he would immediately show the letter to his mother.

It must be quite needless to bestow any time upon describing the feelings of Mrs: Dorking as she perused it. They were powerful, but at the same time very agreeable ; and she had, therefore, no difficulty in restraining her expressions within the bounds of the most perfect good-breeding and propriety.

“ The young lady was too young to know her own mind, my dear Frederic. And all we can say is, that it is better she should have discovered this fact now than later.”

“ Certainly ! ” replied her son, not quite, perhaps, without a feeling of indignation that a woman on such an occasion, or rather concerning such an individual as himself, should ever change her mind at all. And then he said, probably because it was necessary to say something, “ Do you not think, my dear mother, that it will create a tremendous degree of gossip amongst our own set ? The thing was so universally known.”

Mrs. Dorking only shrugged her shoulders in reply. And her son Frederic then added,

"Because, if you think it better, I feel quite sure I could make her reverse the sentence."

"For Heaven's sake, Frederic, do not talk such distracted nonsense ! Leave well alone, my dear son, and be very thankful that the trouble of breaking off this most ridiculous affair has not been thrown upon you. Judith Maitland, with her pretty face, and pretty fortune, will make an excellent match for some one a little less distinguished in society than yourself, provided she does not marry her cousin the painter first. But you, my dear son, are intended for something better than that. You know, Frederic, that it has never been my system to torment you about any thing. But now that the young lady has thought proper to refuse you, I suppose you will permit me to say that I am very glad of it."

"Marry her cousin the painter first!" repeated Frederic, very indignantly. "No, mother! there is no danger of her doing *that*. However, it is possible that you are right as to our not being exactly in the same station in life. She is a most angelic creature ! but it is but too certain that unequal alliances are never happy."

And then the young man ordered his horse,

and rode in the Park ; and it so chanced that he met Charles Worthington walking there.

Charles looked up into his face as he passed him, probably by accident, but took no notice of him, and walked on.

In the uncomfortable vacillating state of mind, from which Frederic Dorking was suffering at that moment, every incident was critical, or, at any rate, influential. "It would be detestable enough," thought he, "to be living on such terms with one's wife's first cousin ! And yet the other extreme might be worse still." And he rode on, meditating moodily enough both on the letter of Judith, and on the insolence of her cousin, as he pleased to call the prudent retreat of Charles into himself from the possible repetition of such a lesson as he had received the day before. In a word, Mr. Frederic Dorking returned to Berkeley Square in a state of mind which some among us may have heard described as "first-rate disgusted ;" and before the end of the week his name might have been found, by those who are curious in such researches, among the fashionable arrivals at the " Hôtel de Londres, Place Vendôme."

CHAPTER XXIII.

IT can be scarcely necessary to mention that these very interesting scenes and events, were followed by a good deal of *boudoir causerie* between Mrs. Dorking and the Lady Augusta Trevors. The wishes and the hopes freely expressed therein by both were in the most harmonious accord. You could not "desire better sympathy;" and even the sudden departure for France of the hero of all they uttered was far from casting any lasting gloom upon their spirits; for, as Mrs. Dorking well observed, nothing on earth could be more natural. He was in a state of transition, and he was quite right to take himself off till it was over; after which, they could neither of them entertain any reasonable doubt that he would re-appear again more brilliant than ever.

Every thing that they had plotted, planned, and performed together, appeared to have succeeded in the most perfect accordance with their wishes and their hopes ; and thus encouraged, they decided upon adding a little *finishing*, for the purpose, as Mrs. Dorking observed, of preventing the possibility of any thing disagreeable being said in any quarter.

This *finishing* consisted in their decision that the portrait of the young lady should go on ; and in that case the portrait of her father also would, of course, go on too,—for he, noble lord, knew no more of the Mortimer Street intrigue than he did of the man in the moon.

“ So, in fact, you see, my dear Mrs. Dorking,” said Lady Augusta, with a charming smile, “ we shall, after all, have been very important patrons to ‘ *cousin Charles*;’ the only difference made by Miss Judith’s letter being, that I will not again trouble her to bestow her company upon me during the sittings. My brother, Lord Worley, will always go with me if I make Lady Jarlington go too; and his being my escort is so very natural, that I do not think it possible to establish any impertinent observations upon it.”

"Admirably arranged!" returned Mrs. Dorking. "But the man won't turn your beautiful portrait into a fright, will he, dear? in order to show his noble indignation at our not cultivating his personal acquaintance," she added.

"Have no fears on that subject, dear lady," replied Lady Augusta, laughing. "There is no great vanity, I suppose, in my saying that he has made a very pretty composition. Lady Jarington, who is a decided amateur, declares that she has not seen any thing so clever for ages; and I do not suspect the young man of being so indifferent to his own success as to mar that picture, for the sake of all the cousin Judiths in the world."

* * * *

In this surmise Lady Augusta Trevors was perfectly correct. Charles felt that the portrait promised to be a good portrait; and his not feeling particularly depressed or out of spirits, in consequence of Judith's dismissal of the "elegant Frederic," as he was accustomed to call him, but, perhaps, if any thing rather the contrary, was rather favourable to the work than otherwise.

Besides, he greatly preferred having Lord Worley and Lady Jarington during the sit-

tings, instead of his cousin Judith and his mother ; so that, in short, the work went on as prosperously as his heart could wish.

The portrait of the young lady's father, too, promised to be equally successful ; and then Lady Jarington, who was a pretty little brunette, as unlike Lady Augusta in style as it was possible for a pretty woman to be, suddenly decided upon having her portrait taken too. And into this portrait the rapid and spirited hand of the young artist threw so much of life and *espièglerie*, that the lively original, who was one of the prettiest and cleverest coquettes in London, soon contrived that it should be the theme of admiration and chit-chat through many of the most influential *salons* of the season ; and the result was such a rush to the painting-room of Charles, as made him talked of from one end of the town to the other.

The success which followed exceeded, to use his own expression when speaking on the subject to his mother, his very brightest, earliest dreams ; and the delight of this to cousin Judith need not be dwelt upon in order to be understood.

But this is forestalling.

Before Judith had reached this happy point

of existence, she had had to pass through more than one painful ordeal.

After the scene which has been described in Charles's painting-room, and which was the final and immediate cause of her withdrawing herself from the engagement which had become so repugnant to her feelings, her first step was, of course, to inform Frederic himself of her change of purpose. And when this was done, in the manner we have seen, she felt as if delivered from an intolerable load which had for many weeks past lain upon her heart, till every feeling approaching to enjoyment was utterly destroyed by it.

The relief this decisive act brought to her spirits was so soothing, that, with rather a cowardly sort of feeling, she resolved to enjoy it for a few short days before she again ruffled the course of her existence by communicating what she had done to her aunt Elfreda. She certainly dreaded, not a little, both the grief and the anger this disclosure was sure to produce; nor was the sending this news to Mrs. Chilbert a task at all more agreeable. Both might be deferred, she thought, without producing inconvenience to any one; and, moreover, some advantage would be gained in the way of preparation, as far as

her aunt Elfreda was concerned, by the non-appearance of Frederic Dorking in Green Street.

She indulged herself meanwhile, however, without restraint in talking over the whole affair with her aunt Worthington, and did not scruple, when the deed was done, to put into her hands the courageous document by which, as she said, she had restored to herself the precious freedom which she had given away before she knew what she was about.

And then, the deed being done, Mrs. Worthington herself did not scruple to confess that she rejoiced.

“ That the marriage would have been a very brilliant one, I am quite aware,” said she; “ and I neither am, nor ever have been, notwithstanding my own early history may have given my family reason to doubt the fact,—I never have been insensible, Judith, to the positive advantages of rank and fortune. I only think that they may be purchased too dearly. As to Mr. Dorking himself, there was much besides either rank or fortune to recommend him ; he had much that was attractive, much that was amiable, about him. But it was very evident that he wanted firmness of character, and it could scarcely have been hoped that in

a union with him you should have been long happy ; for as your own faculties went on (as they must do) strengthening and expanding as you grow older, you could not have long remained satisfied with his."

"This is so true, so very true," replied Judith, with an earnestness that brought tears to her eyes, "that I do declare to you that the doubts which have tortured me of late have been as much a matter of conscience as of—of.....may I say *distaste*, without speaking too unkindly of Mr. Dorking ?"

"There is no need to say it—there is no need to say any thing explanatory either of your feelings or motives, Judith," replied her aunt. "Your extreme youth at the time the engagement was formed will be an excuse obvious to all who choose to sit in judgment on the question. But there certainly is one grave and serious trouble left for you, my dear child," continued Mrs. Worthington, shaking her head, "and it is one, Judith, that I do not think you ought to put off any longer. I mean, as I am quite sure you have guessed already, the telling my sister Elfreda what has happened."

"Yes, aunt," replied poor Judith, with a heavy sigh.

"Very well, then, dear girl, do it at once.

Do it this very day, as soon as you go home ; and if you will say ‘ yes ’ again, my uncivil rejoinder will be, that the sooner you go home the better,” said Mrs. Worthington firmly.

“ No, aunt Penelope ! not to-day, no,—nor to-morrow either ; for to-morrow there is to be a champêtre breakfast at the villa of a duchess, and Charles knows, if you don’t, that he will not have any sitters except Lady Morton’s cherub children, and they, you know, always go home before two o’clock. And therefore, as I thought I had told you already, my beloved aunt, you are going to-morrow with your son, and your niece, and your sister too, if she will give up her lecture upon the comet, to see the cartoons at Hampton Court.”

“ Am I ?” said Mrs. Worthington, smiling, but rather reproachfully. “ Would not that do for some later day, Judith ?”

“ And the sitters ?” said Judith, very reproachfully, in her turn. “ Oh ! aunt Penelope,” she added, “ if you did but know what I have suffered about those pictures at Hampton Court, you would not refuse me [this one dear holiday before my work of penance begins. When I was at the very highest pinnacle of my favour with Mrs. Dorking, she proposed a pic-nic party to Hampton Court, expressly, as

she said, for the purpose of showing me the cartoons. And I, who know I could as easily get St. Paul's cathedral invited as either you or my cousin Charles, I had to invent delays, and finally find reasons for not going at all. And I did it too, *ergo*; I have never seen the cartoons. And surely, therefore, you will let me put off this terrible disclosure a couple of days longer?"

"Well, wilful one! I suppose you must have your way," replied her aunt; "but I will only go, Judith," she added, very gravely—"I will only go, Judith, on condition that you will promise me not to delay this confession beyond the day after to-morrow."

"Agreed!" said Judith. "Let us go into the painting-room for one moment—may we, aunt? I want to see how all the things get on."

This request was granted. Charles was reminded that the morrow was the day for Hampton Court, and so they parted, each of them probably rather more happy than they would have chosen to confess to the others.

The morrow, the very happy morrow, came. The sun shone brightly. Miss Elfreda was too scientific to forsake her lecture, but the trio contrived to do without her; and, moreover, a

message arrived from Lady Morton before ten o'clock, saying that her children had colds, which would prevent their waiting upon Mr. Worthington that morning. So that every thing was as propitious as the heart of Judith could wish, and never was an expedition more thoroughly enjoyed.

It had been settled that they were to dine with Miss Elfreda at a late hour, and pass a quiet evening with her, quite *en famille*. Her partiality for her nephew Charles had gone on very rapidly increasing from the time that he had requested her to sit for her picture ; and it is equally true, that the want of courtesy and observance shown by Mrs. Dorking towards her on various occasions, but particularly by her not having been invited to her ball, had gone farther towards making her feel that Charles, with all his brilliant talents, was a more important personage to her than Mr. Frederic Dorking and all his brilliant prospects, than Judith had as yet dared to flatter herself could be possible.

On arriving in high spirits, however, at Miss Elfreda's dwelling upon the present occasion, they were all struck by the air of sadness which seemed to have taken possession of her features ; and each individual of the trio felt

convinced that, by some means or other, she had been made acquainted with the separation which had taken place between Judith and her lover.

The heart of the conscious girl sunk within her, and she felt but too certain that this one dear evening, which she hoped to pass in the peaceable enjoyment of all that she best loved, was about to be poisoned by her disappointed aunt Elfreda's lectures upon her wickedness ! They were all three, however, extremely surprised, and extremely puzzled, by the manner in which her disappointment displayed itself.

Instead of testifying any displeasure towards Judith, every word she addressed to her seemed replete with the most gentle and pitying tenderness.

Now this was, at any rate, a great deal better than being scolded, and the consequence of her feeling it to be so put Judith so much at her ease and, in fact, into such gay spirits, that she uttered sally after sally, full of mirth and happiness.

Whereupon Miss Elfreda, having apparently endured this as long as she could, suddenly seized upon Judith, and clasping her to her bosom, exclaimed, "Alas ! my poor dear child ! it is too, too melancholy to see you in such

high spirits, when I know the terrible blow that awaits you!"

"What is it you mean?" cried Charles, greatly agitated; "what is it that awaits my cousin Judith?"

"You have none of you seen the 'Morning Post' to-day? But I need not ask you.—It is but too evident that you none of you know any thing about it!"

"About what, Elfreda?" demanded Mrs. Worthington, earnestly.—"You have made Judith look very pale, sister."

"Only tell me," said Judith, "only tell me, aunt Elfreda! Has any thing happened to Mrs. Chilbert?"

"To Mrs. Chilbert? No, no, my poor child," replied the pitying Miss Elfreda. "It is something a good deal worse than that, Judith! I fear—I fear that Frederic Dorking is in reality as false and cold-hearted as his proud mother! In one word, Judith, I fear he has forsaken you!—for the 'Morning Post' announces his arrival among the fashionable people at Paris; and if he has really gone there without saying a single word to you about it, what are we to think?"

For "one moment and no more," the eyes of Charles and Judith met, and a strong in-

clination to smile was in great danger of becoming perceptible on the face of each. But Judith parried the mischief which might have ensued, by saying, very gravely,—

“I would have you think, dear aunt, exactly what I think myself, and what we can have no doubt Mr. Frederic Dorking thinks too ; namely, that we shall both of us be better asunder than together. You know, aunt Elfreda, that however civil his mother and father have been to me, probably on account of my fortune, they have given the most decided, and, I must say, the most offensive proofs that they do not consider you, or any other member of my family, as worthy of becoming members of theirs ; and if such is their feeling, aunt Elfreda, you need not fear that my happiness will be the sacrifice to our separation. Believe me that, in that case, it would have been much more likely to have been sacrificed by our union.”

“I am sure it is very pretty and very dutiful of you to say so, my dear ! And I cannot but own that her not asking me to her ball does look very much indeed as if you were right. Mr. Frederic himself did not behave as a lover ought upon such an occasion, for he certainly might have got

me invited, if he had cared enough about you to try."

"I do not believe that we shall any of us greatly differ with you in opinion on this point," replied Judith; "and if this be so, we surely shall not devote many more of our thoughts either to him or his family. I was very, *very* young, aunt Elfreda, when this engagement was formed, and that must be my excuse for not breaking my heart because it is at an end. Let us talk no more about it!"

As it was afterwards agreed between Judith and her confidential aunt Penelope that no possible good could be done by stating exactly all the circumstances of the case to Miss Elfreda, and that a great deal of mischief might be avoided by letting it alone, it was finally agreed between them that the willow should be assigned to her, and not to the gentleman, who, as Judith said, would probably find it much more troublesome to wear than she should do.

Mr. Frederic Dorking kept his own counsel too; and it therefore soon became the generally-received idea, that the young man, having himself got tired of the *mesalliance* with which he had threatened his charming mother, had suddenly gone abroad in order to get rid of it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

If the Reader imagines that the effect of this important change in the destiny of Judith was to inspire in Charles Worthington any hope of succeeding Frederic Dorking in her heart, he is very greatly mistaken. It is true that Charles had never been in love before he first beheld his cousin Judith ; and it is true also, that, if at any moment of his adult existence he had taxed his imagination to paint for him exactly such a woman as he could most devotedly have loved, the product would probably have been something exceedingly like, in form and feature, in heart and soul, in temper and character, in taste and pursuit, such a creature as he had found in his cousin Judith.

Yet, nevertheless, he was still at an im-

mense distance from being in love with her ; therefore it may fairly be asked what thoughts, what hopes, what intentions could he have had ? And I can truly answer none, none whatever, absolutely and positively none. Then, how was it possible he could be in love with her ? The only clear and distinct thought he had about her was, that she was a rich heiress ; and the most clear and distinct thought that he had about himself was, that he was penniless.

And had Judith at this time any very distinct thoughts about a future union with Charles Worthington ? No ! most certainly she had not.

She felt, poor girl, and felt very painfully, that she had already compromised her delicacy in having rashly promised to marry a man, for no other reason in the world, that she could now assign, except that he had asked her to do so.

Crimson was the blush with which she remembered the feeling of extreme gratitude with which his proposal had inspired her !

And this she had taken for love ! Alas ! how little did she know then what love was !

And now she wondered, too, that her dear Mrs. Chilbert could have been so rash and

thoughtless as to give her credit for feeling what it now seemed to her to have been so very improbable that she could feel.

And she remembered, also, with a sentiment very nearly approaching indignation, the cordial congratulations of Dr. Wroughtley on the *brilliant* conquest she had made; by which brilliance she was now very sure that he meant wealth and station!

And was it possible that her Mrs. Chilbert meant the same? No, no! *That* was impossible! Yet still she ought to have been more cautious for her.

But let who might be to blame besides, it must be quite certain that *she* was herself the most to blame of all!

And what could Charles think upon the subject? Either that she was inconstant as the wind, or else that she had, in truth, as she herself confessed to her own heart, consented to marry a young gentleman for no other reason in the world than because he had asked her!

Such being the respective condition of these young people, it was not very likely that they should speedily come to an understanding, and discover that they were as heartily and passionately in love with each other as

it was well possible for a young man and maiden to be.

Nevertheless, they were very far from being in a condition that would be called unhappy. With all her remorse for the wicked weakness which had led her to fancy herself in love when there was no such thing, Judith was by no means insensible to the blessing of being free again, and of having no worse misery to fear, as the punishment of her imprudence, than the regret—and as she felt it, the *shame* of having committed it.

And as to Charles, he had been too well taught in the school of real sorrow to mistake the absence of perfect happiness for the presence of misery. Besides, all worldly concerns were going well with him. He had referred to Mr. Carey to decide for him what price he ought to ask for his portraits; and that gentleman having obtained the young artist's permission to bring two of the first artists of the day to sit in judgment on his works, the result was, that so high a price was named as greatly to astonish him. But having sought advice, he determined to abide by it; yet, nevertheless, had speedily so many orders, that it required all the activity of his age and energetic character

to enable him to get through all the work he undertook.

Mr. Carey had helped them very effectually, also, in the disposal of the diamonds, which produced a sum amply sufficient to set free the gallery of pictures left at Rome. To dispose of these advantageously was a matter of great importance ; and it was finally decided, that when London was sufficiently empty to prevent any great chance of new sitters, Charles should run off to his native Rome, and decide there what it would be best to do with them. And then it was that a thought, and a wish, which had long taken possession of Judith, was at length put into execution ; her aunt Worthington was invited to make one of Miss Elfreda's family !

This very happy arrangement was not brought about without a little good management on the part of the young heiress ; but this, together with the help of a little eloquence on the part of Mr. Carey, so wrought upon the feelings of Miss Elfreda, that she was at length brought to express her conviction that they were right, and that the taking, by Judith's willing help, a whole house in the Regent's Park might, as the carriage was not to be given up, form altogether a still more desirable

establishment than that on which she had so much prided herself in Green Street.

Not all her lectures had done her half so much good in the way of instruction as a little of Mrs. Dorking's impertinence, and Miss Elfreda was a wiser woman for it during the whole of her after-life ; which it is probable could not be said with equal veracity of any of the various scientific pursuits to which she had applied herself for the greater part of her existence.

But the charming Mrs. Chilbert has been forgotten too long in the hurry of these important changes. Judith had again, in her case, as in that of her aunt Elfreda, the good luck of being spared the announcement of her splendid engagement being at an end, by Mrs. Chilbert's having read the announcement of Mr. Frederic Dorking's arrival in Paris.

She lost not an hour in writing to her young friend for information on the subject, evidently fearing that something "wrong," as she expressed it, must have occurred to send such a man as Frederic Dorking out of London, when there were so many delightful reasons for his remaining in it.

Judith's answer to this letter was certainly not, strictly speaking, what could be called

satisfactory. For, in the first place, she confirmed her friend's worst fears by avowing that the engagement was at an end between them, and in the next she deferred to some future meeting the task of relating all particulars.

But the vexed Mrs. Chilbert thought she understood all the particulars perfectly well, when she learned from the indignant Miss Barbara that her sister Elfreda had been weak enough, and, as she could not but call it, wicked enough, to take in Mrs. Worthington to keep house with her.

"And where is the young man? Mrs. Worthington's son, I mean," said Mrs. Chilbert, recollecting how much her fears of him had increased the zeal with which she had propitiated the admiration of Frederic Dorking for her (too) young friend.

"Upon my word, ma'am, I neither know nor care," was the ungentle reply. "But he is living with them, of course—at least I suppose so."

* * * *

Charles Worthington, however, was better employed than he could have been if he had been living with them, even if he had had half the aristocracy of England sitting to him the while; for he was studying—studying as perhaps no man can study, save at Rome.

Not that he took any picture or pictures there, from the sublime Transfiguration to the touching Cinci, as his models. There was more of science than of mimicry in his studies. He studied anatomy in the same school where Michael Angelo had studied it before him. Outline and expression he found wandering in the streets ; gorgeousness and grace in architecture—where could he look and not find it ? Atmosphere he studied in the Campagna, and colouring everywhere.

And in this way three years of immense importance to him wore away, not rapidly, for every day, and almost every hour, seemed to leave its mark.

At the end of that time he returned to England, not at all a richer man than when he left it, for he had not painted a single picture for sale. But the collection of pictures, which had caused him so much sorrow, had been gradually and advantageously disposed of, so as to supply both his mother and himself with all they wanted,—and Charles was not at all afraid to spend it, for he felt a very comfortable confidence in his power of making more by his art.

And what became of the ladies of the family during this interval ? Their history is soon

told. Mrs. Worthington, notwithstanding the prolonged absence of her son, was very far from being unhappy ; Judith supplied his place much better than any one else could have done. Miss Elfreda was in every way delighted with the change in their manner of living, and felt herself to be of so much more consequence than before, that she actually had her cards printed Mrs. E. Jenkyns, in order, as she said, to be consistent.

And Judith ! Was Judith unhappy in her greatly changed state of existence ? No. On the contrary, she was infinitely happier than in her most successful days of fashionable celebrity she had ever hoped to be.

A very young lady, who has fancied herself very much in love, and being very heartily ashamed of herself when she found out that she was mistaken, is not likely very speedily to suffer again from another attack of the tender passion ; and it was probably for this reason that Judith did not *suffer*, though, nevertheless, it can hardly be denied that she was in love with her cousin Charles. But her condition was not that of suffering. In the first place, she had a constant feeling of thankfulness for the turn affairs had taken, and this was a very happy sensation. And where now

was all her heart-aching anxiety about her aunt Penelope? All the heart-aching was gone, and the anxiety to make her happy was converted into a never-ceasing source of happiness.

Another source of enjoyment was found in summer and autumn travelling through all the most beautiful scenery of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. And they might have wandered further still, for they all enjoyed it, only they were told that there might be trouble, if Miss Barbara chose to make a fuss about it, in obtaining permission for the ward in Chancery to go abroad; and they very wisely agreed, therefore, to wait for this till Judith was of age.

And, upon two of their pleasant tours, the kind-hearted heiress obtained permission to give the fourth place in their travelling carriage to poor Miss Tollbridge, who had never been forgotten by her, though she seemed to have been by her unobservant historian,—and, in short, my beautiful heroine passed three very happy and very profitable years without any love-making at all.

Mrs. Chilbert was exceedingly puzzled, and so was Dr. Wroughtley; and the latter would have been very apt to suspect that the two old ladies, who had got such fair possession of her, were keeping it by the strong hand, had he not

still adhered firmly to his first opinion respecting Judith being a self-willed young lady. "To be sure," said the worthy senior prebend, when conversing upon the subject with Mrs. Chilbert, "it does seem to be a very mysterious business, from first to last. Such a beautiful girl as that, with a fine fortune too, remaining single all this time! It does look very much as if she were kept under pretty tight control. And yet, Mrs. Dean, I should not mind, now, taking a bet that the young lady will contrive to have her own way at last."

Yet Charles came home, after three years of absence, without any thing in the least like love-making being hinted at by any of them. He brought home with him two pictures, which were exhibited with such extraordinary success, that a larger painting-room than that in Mortimer Street was not quite large enough to accommodate all the pictures he had orders to paint, and all the people who came to look at them.

Success could not be greater or more rapid; and even the elegant Mrs. E. Jenkyns began to think that a celebrated painter might not altogether be a disgraceful connexion.

The pride, the joy, the measureless contentment of his mother and his cousin Judith must be imagined,—and no imagination can do

it more than justice. Within rather more than a year after Charles Worthington returned to England, Judith Maitland came of age. But the being put into possession of her fortune made little or no difference in their domestic arrangements, excepting, indeed, that Mrs. E. Jenkyns rather suddenly announced to her sister and niece that, as it was probable that her niece would now choose to become mistress of her own house, she had thought it advisable to promise to become mistress of that of the Herr Hans Wagner, a gentleman who spoke English perfectly, as was proved by his lecturing in that language with great success at a lecture-room not very far from the Regent's Park, to which she had for some time been in the habit of resorting very punctually.

Judith, on hearing this, very generously made her a present of the house and furniture which had been purchased for her at the time they left Green Street. Her strong wish to go abroad, to which there was now no longer any objection, made this arrangement very convenient to all parties; and Mr. and Mrs. Wagner took possession of the premises the very day that Mrs. Worthington, her son Charles, and her niece Judith set out upon a tour to the continent.

CONCLUSION.

THE passion for scenery-hunting which, as I have been told a hundred times, is so essentially characteristic of the inhabitants of "*les Iles Britanniques*," received a terrible check in the year of our Lord 1848, and this retained its preventive influence for a good while ; but now the panic seems to have subsided, and we hear of our friends and acquaintance flying off again, north, east, west, and south, in pursuit of the picturesque.

The check may have been useful in more ways than one; for an impediment removed unquestionably adds pleasure to our progress, and, moreover, the abstaining from beating the high-roads of any country for a year or two, improves our chance of finding something new to look at when we start off anew.

I do not mean to tell the English tourist, that if he will pass from Venice into Austria he will see now what he could never have seen before in the way of scenery ; but I may tell him, that if he will linger a little about the Pass of Ampezzo, and more particularly in that part of it known by the name of Capo del Cadore, he may not only see the spot where Titian was born, and which tells in characters earth-born, yet divine, where and how it was that the immortal Venetian got those bits of back-ground which make us look out of the windows of his portraits as if we were looking upon Heaven's own workmanship ; he may not only see this, but he may see something exceedingly well worth looking at besides.

A particular friend of mine assures me that, just in the most beautiful part of this remarkable region, an accident occurred to his carriage which, though it did no injury to life or limb, might have been productive of much inconvenience to him but for the following incident. The carriage was overturned, and his servants were engaged, as is usual upon such occasions, in disentangling the horses from their harness, when he, who was standing somewhat disconsolately by the side of his

carriage, was addressed in English by a tall gentleman, who leaped from a bank with a sketch-book in one hand and a pencil in the other, begging to know if he could be of any use.

The unfortunate traveller returned the friendly salutation very gratefully, stating frankly that he did not very well know how to dispose of himself and his luggage while his carriage, which was considerably injured, was being put into travelling condition again.

"Concerning yourself and your luggage, there will be no difficulty, for my house is within ten minutes' walking ; but I am afraid we must go further before you will find a workman that you would like to employ upon your carriage. The first thing to be done, however, now that the poor horses are extricated, is to convey your luggage to the forest abode to which, I hope, you are going yourself.—And here comes one of my own labourers, who may assist your servant in conveying your things ; and he may be consulted, too, as to the best way of getting the carriage set to rights."

All this was very pleasant, and very fortunate, and my travelling friend gladly, and gratefully, received the kindness offered to him.

A few minutes set every thing in a fair way of being well arranged ; the new-comer, who seemed to be a very intelligent sort of personage, giving it as his opinion that the carriage might be put into safe travelling condition by a wheelwright in the neighbouring dorf. And orders being given accordingly, the traveller and his hospitable new acquaintance set off upon their ten minutes' walk.

The walk, however, took more than ten minutes, though the distance, perhaps, might have been easily traversed in that time. But at a point a few hundred yards from the place of meeting, they turned from the high road into a path not easily passed at full speed.

There is no possibility of describing, at least none vested in me, the bold hills and the narrow valleys, the dark forests and the little flowery meads, the rushing waters and the frowning rocks of the region surrounding Capo del Cadore, and amongst all this it was that my touring friend was now led ; and although the path is a very well made path, and has evidently been carefully attended to of late, in order to convert it, in spite of its wild neighbourhood, into a pleasant walk for no ungentle feet,—notwithstanding this, it was impossible to pass along it rapidly.

Every step seemed to disclose some new charm, for charm there was even in the black gorges that sometimes opened almost beneath their feet; and in the strange variety of light and shade there was charm too,—and in the wide-spreading distance there, and in the close leafy covert here, none of it could be passed by without pausing.

But at last this enchanting path seemed to end, for it came to a turn so sudden, as to show nothing beyond it but a vast mass of perpendicular rock.

But the sudden turn being followed, the scene changed into something as different from all they had been passing through, as it was well possible for art and nature combined to make it.

Instead of the frowning rock, they beheld a smiling lawn; and instead of tangled forest, a low, but wide-spreading mansion, surrounded on all sides by an ample colonnade, which seemed by the chairs, and even sofas, which were placed in it, to be a well-loved part of the mansion.

The whole scene, both from the effect of contrast and its own enchanting loveliness, caused the tourist to stop short to gaze upon it, as if he had been spell-bound; and his hos-

pitable conductor smiled at the vehemence of the exclamation by which his admiration was expressed.

A few hundred yards further brought them to the gate of the slight fence which surrounded the little lawn, and a few steps further still displayed a group as picturesque in its way as any of the enchanting scenes they had passed in reaching it. It consisted of an elderly lady, who, if an elderly lady could by possibility be beautiful, might assuredly be so described, for her countenance expressed both sweetness and intelligence, and her figure had both grace and dignity.

She was knitting, as all ladies seem to do on approaching Germany, as if by instinct ; but there was more of idleness than of occupation in her attitude, for it was evident that more of her attention was given to the landscape than to her work, and more to the two companions who were near her than to either.

To both of these, however, this epithet of *beautiful* might very safely have been applied without any qualification whatever, the one being a very perfectly lovely woman, not apparently much past twenty ; and the other a crawling, crowing boy, thrown, as if by accident, among a heap of cushions at the

feet of his young mother, and evidently not having yet numbered twelve months.

Young as he was, however, he hailed the approach of his father by a cry so eloquent of joy, that Charles Worthington (for this hospitable indweller at Capo del Cadore was Charles Worthington) suspended his introduction of the stranger guest to his wife and his mother till he had caught him in his arms, and repaid his welcome by a kiss.

And does the reader believe that his beautiful wife was any other than the wilful Judith ? If he does, he is mistaken.

All that must have passed in the interval since they left England is, in fact, too easily imagined to make description of it necessary. It was not very likely that they could visit France, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany together, without confessing to each other the respective states of each other's hearts ; and though Charles was a little annoyed on account of Judith's being so very rich, she gave him great comfort under the infliction by pointing out the fact, that he might easily double her income by painting, if she could afford him sufficient leisure so to employ himself. And, in fact, he does sometimes, at Rome, where their winters are generally spent,

paint a picture, for which he gets an enormous price ; and he threatens now to paint a great many more, because there is great probability that his family may increase.

As to the ever-dear friend of her girlhood, the very charming but a little fine Mrs. Chilbert, it took some time to convince her thoroughly that she had been wrong, and Judith right, in the judgments they had respectively formed respecting the choice of a husband. It was not easy to convince her that it was possible a very agreeable young painter could be reasonably preferred to a very agreeable young nobleman,—for Frederic Dorking had attained that rank before she confessed herself wrong ; and it may even now be doubted if that confession would ever have been made had she not happened to hear Charles Worthington sing, under the shadow of his own vine, at his Venetian farm at Capo del Cadore.

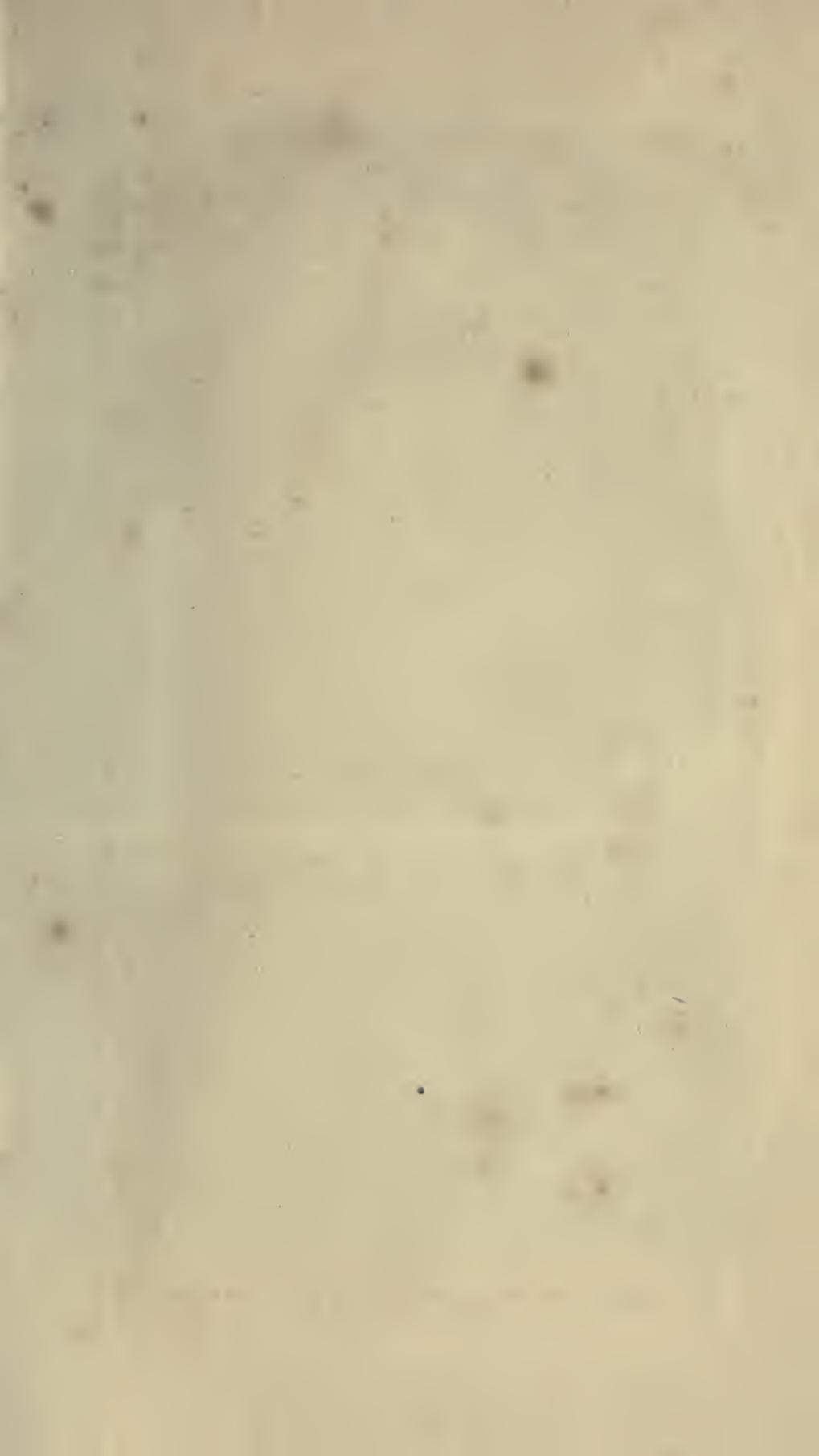
The Lady Augusta Trevors is still unmarried ; and a particularly confidential friend of Frederic Dorking's has been heard to declare that, of all women living, the said Frederic dislikes the Lady Augusta Trevors the most.

Does any body want to know what has become of Miss Barbara Jenkyns ? Nothing

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has become of her. To the best of my knowledge and belief there she is still, playing whist and giving little suppers at Westhampton ; but nobody has ever heard of Dr. Wroughtley's dining with her *tête-à-tête* again.

THE END.



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